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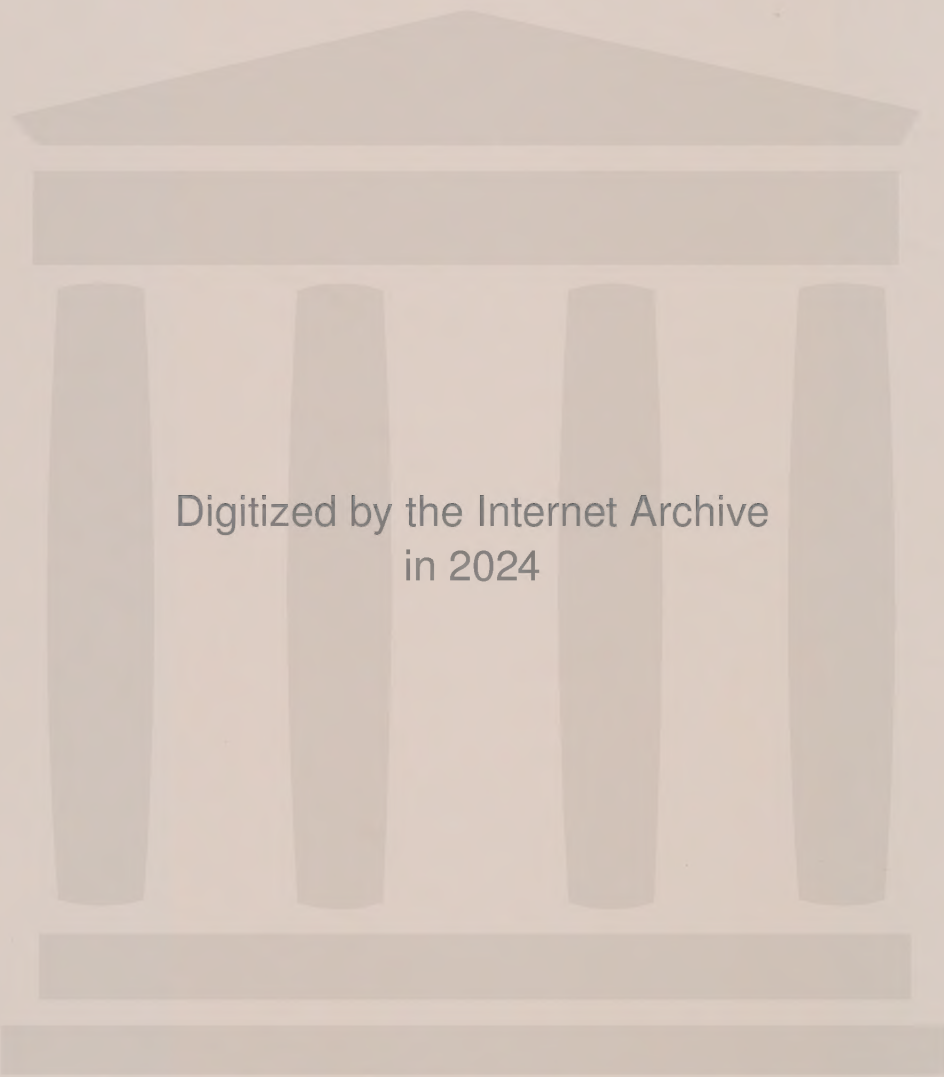
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COLONIAL GARDENS

The Landscape Architecture *of* George Washington's Time

Prepared by the
AMERICAN SOCIETY OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS

UNITED STATES GEORGE WASHINGTON
BICENTENNIAL COMMISSION

WASHINGTON, D. C.

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PREFACE

The United States Commission for the Celebration of the Two Hundredth Anniversary of the Birth of George Washington has authorized the preparation of this publication on COLONIAL GARDENS, and now issues it as one of its activities in connection with the George Washington Bicentennial Celebration.

In the compilation of the manuscript, the Commission has been aided by the American Society of Landscape Architects, and particularly by certain of its members who have contributed without remuneration those portions bearing upon the particular field in which they are recognized authorities. The chapters on "Mount Vernon and Other Colonial Places of the South" and "Gardens of Old Salem and the New England Colonies" are from the pen of Arthur A. Shurcliff, Fellow and Past President of the American Society of Landscape Architects, and landscape architect associated with the architects in charge of the restoration of Williamsburg and of "Stratford," boyhood home of General Robert E. Lee. The chapter on "Homes and Gardens of Old New York" has been contributed by Richard Schermerhorn, Jr., Fellow of the American Society of Landscape Architects, and that on "Gardens and Places of Colonial Philadelphia," by Robert Wheelwright, Member of the American Society of Landscape Architects and Professor of Landscape Architecture at the University of Pennsylvania. The final chapter, on "The Colonial Garden To-day," has been written by Fletcher Steele, Fellow of the American Society of Landscape Architects and author of *Design in the Little Garden*.

Without the generous help of these contributing authors and the valuable assistance of a Committee of members of the Society, comprising the above with Robert Washburn Beal, Charles F. Gillette, Eugene D. Montillon, and Bradford Williams, under the chairmanship of Albert D. Taylor, this publication could not have achieved its present degree of authenticity.

The task of editing and arranging this material has been performed by Bradford Williams, Member of the American Society of Landscape Architects, who has brought to his work an experience gained as Contributing Editor to *Landscape Architecture* and *The American Magazine of Art*.

SOL BLOOM, *Associate Director*
United States George Washington Bicentennial Commission



MOUNT VERNON
The Home and Garden of George Washington

CHAPTER I

Introduction

Of the many ways of honoring a national figure on the two hundredth anniversary of his birth, none could be greater than to make him live again among us and to find him young in spirit. George Washington could be honored in this way, for in the rôle of farmer, statesman, soldier, or engineer, his memory is as fresh to-day as his thoughts were clear and his action direct a century and a half ago.

One aspect of the life of George Washington in which he could be re-created with particular appropriateness is that of the country gentleman. From his own diaries and letters we know the minutest details of his life as a planter or farmer as well as gardener. We see him clearly in his home life at Mount Vernon; and in fact, Mount Vernon to-day is the embodiment for us of George Washington's existence, for in the undying charm of this mansion and its grounds he lives with as much reality and with greater persistency than during the few years of private enjoyment that his life of sacrifice to the public good ever permitted him.

This part of George Washington's life belongs to every citizen. We revere him as a patriot for his generous sacrifice of private life and interests to an untried cause; as a soldier, for his ability to lead others in defense of this cause; as a statesman, for his understanding in the guidance of a frail vessel through perilous waters. But we feel most closely united to him in his life as a citizen when he shared the same happiness and sorrows of home life that we, nearly two hundred years later, experience to-day.

Among the never-failing joys of George Washington's private life were his gardens. The management of broad acres at Mount Vernon was both business and pleasure for him, but the arrangement and care of the flower and vegetable gardens and of the grounds in the immediate vicinity of the mansion gave him particular satisfaction. In writing of him as a gardener, we touch on that side of his activities that is most closely akin to the experience of the average citizen to-day. In him we see an interest and a knowledge of the practical science of horticulture that enabled him to collect and grow in his gardens a wide variety of both native and rare plants; but we find that he also had a love for the beautiful that enabled him to appreciate the orderly arrangement of his grounds and buildings

and made him an outstanding patron of the art of landscape architecture or, as it was called at that time, landscape gardening.

One reason, then, for selecting the Colonial Garden as the object of this study is to reveal George Washington, the Planter, as one of the gardeners of his time. The picture of the Colonial Garden that is presented in these pages portrays the garden background of the period as the Virginia Planter saw it in his journeys through the Colonies. Just as he was known in the home of every great soldier and statesman of the time, so was he known in the gardens of his compatriots, as well as abroad. In this we see to-day another instance of his universality; for the love of growing things is universal throughout the breadth of the land and across the seas.

But a second reason is the example that he set for the citizen of to-day in the development of his own home at Mount Vernon. From the early year of his life when he inherited the family home from his brother Lawrence, he maintained the hope that he might develop his house and grounds according to his dignified tastes. During his journeys to the sessions of the House of Burgesses at Williamsburg, or to the Congresses at Philadelphia, or to duties in the more remote colonies of New York and New England, he absorbed impressions from the many handsome places he visited, and when finally he was able to reconstruct the mansion and lay out the grounds in accordance with the prevailing style, he created an establishment that was both suited to the necessary uses of the time and yet possessed all the elements of outdoor enjoyment that are found in the best of the Colonial homes and gardens.

THE EDITOR.

CHAPTER II

The Colonial Garden: Its History and Meaning

Much has been said and written of the gardens of the Colonial period, and yet students of garden art have great difficulty in defining the term "Colonial Garden." In other periods of garden history, we can easily identify the typical development of the time through characteristics common to a number of examples in the period. The term "Moorish Garden in Spain" or "Italian Renaissance Garden" conveys some idea of a particular garden style that has grown up and become recognizable through repeated use of certain principles and characteristics of design.

The gardens of the American colonies were developed under widely divergent conditions of climate and without a common background of social or national characteristics. They developed individually in their own locality. A fusion of types came only as the inherited characteristics of the earliest settlers were modified by long residence in a new country and as means of travel and communication were improved. They were a definite outgrowth of the time and the people, and as such they had their place. With the passing of these conditions, the Colonial Garden passed.

The garden development of the Colonial period can exist for us only in spirit, for to-day there can be no such thing as a true Colonial Garden. To be sure there are the physical remains of old gardens, and in their glory of old trees and ancient box we can people them with the products of our imagination so that they become alive again in their atmosphere of an inherited past. But the people are changed and the environment is different; even the countryside has undergone an alteration under the influence of the march of time.

The Colonial Garden of George Washington's time was not what we know to-day as a garden. In most instances there was a definitely segregated enclosed place where plants could be grown free from the inroads of cattle, but in few cases except in later days were these enclosed areas given over purely to out-of-door enjoyment and the cultivation of flowers. In the smaller places seeds were planted in any suitable corner; garden activities, both useful and ornamental, were carried on wherever was most convenient, and it was hard to distinguish the "garden" from any other part of the dooryard. On the larger places, where men and means

were more available, more ordered effects were attempted; here trees and great hedges were considered part of the garden, and even the mansion and its outbuildings were treated as part of the garden scheme. This meaning of the Colonial Garden must be clear in order to understand the importance of the garden in the thought of the times.

The Colonial Garden of Washington's time played a far more important part in home life than does our garden to-day. People spent more time at home, partly because conditions were not favorable for travel, and partly because there was little reason for travel. The Colonial home and garden was the center of family life and, as such, it was the place of exchange for social courtesies and of shelter for the traveler. The home was the place of business where all the outdoor activities of the establishment were centered. Outside of the towns it was in the home that you could be certain of finding all people who were not engaged in public occupations or who were not temporarily absent on their business. In the case of the smallest properties, the house, being hot or crowded or inconvenient, must frequently have been unsuited to the entertainment of visitors, and it was natural that some part of the immediate out-of-doors should become a center of the family living during a large part of the year.

The fashions in gardening were more clearly revealed in the house grounds of the well-to-do, for people of "consequence" kept in close touch with England and the Continent,—perhaps more closely in intellectual communion than we to-day, notwithstanding our improved modes of communication and travel. Building and gardening in 17th-century England and France started with grand scale, long symmetrical vistas and avenues, labyrinths, parterres, and rich decoration.

Similar ideas, but necessarily not so elaborate, appealed to the owners of great estates in the South and as far north as Philadelphia. Houses and outbuildings were laid out symmetrically with long axial avenues and vistas. At times the scale, where topography permitted, was quite as magnificent as in Europe. Cultured travelers from abroad found much to admire in our more splendid Colonial estates, though in detail they could not vie with the palaces of kings.

During Washington's lifetime, due at the end in no small measure to the impetus that his leadership of a revolution for the rights of man inspired, the style changed, for fashion "leapt the fence and saw that all nature was a garden." The park style of landscape architecture came into being with great open meadows, fine trees, distant vistas, and wandering walks and drives. This mode of treating natural scenery was,



MOUNT VERNON FROM THE WEST
View Across the Vegetable Garden

and has remained, sympathetic to the American people. It was adopted North and South, though mostly in the North, and most successfully along the Hudson River.

Mount Vernon is the typical example of the large Colonial estate in the late days of the Colonies, and there Washington combined the prevailing landscape styles. In his early travels he had found at Philadelphia and elsewhere examples of the 17th-century formal fashion, and if he had made over his grounds at that time it is conceivable that he might have developed a plan of straight avenues and formal parterres of statuary, flowers, and greenery. But he had reached his fifty-second year and had brought the War to a successful conclusion before he began those changes on the grounds that resulted in the form we know to-day; by then he had seen the newer style of landscape gardening and had decided to adapt it to his own use.

It was Washington's pride to be thought the first farmer in America. In 1773 he had spent fourteen years of his married life at Mount Vernon and, save for repairs that had been made in anticipation of his marriage, the mansion was exactly the same as when he, at the age of fifteen, had taken up his home there with his brother Lawrence. These years of domestic and social life had revealed the limitations of the establishment, and in the autumn of 1773 the carpenters began to carry out his plans for enlarging the building. The changes were not soon completed, however, for it was not until 1778 while Washington was in the third year of his military campaigning that the mansion was raised and its proportions extended to their now familiar shape, the curved and colonnaded covered ways were built, and the portico on the river side was added. One Sunday morning in September, 1781, when pressing ahead of the army which was making a forced march south to join Lafayette at Williamsburg, he stopped at Mount Vernon for the first time in six years, and was rewarded by the first view of his completed mansion.*

On Christmas Eve, 1783, General and Mrs. Washington returned to Mount Vernon from Annapolis where he had laid down his commission on the disbandment of the Continental Army. During the following months—a winter of exceptional ice and snow for the region of the Potomac—Washington laid out his scheme of improvements for the gardens and farms. His diaries of 1785-6 are a running guide to his activities in the adornment of the grounds. As a horticulturist prior to the Revolution, his tastes had been predominantly utilitarian, but as

* *Mount Vernon: Washington's Home and the Nation's Shrine.* By Paul Wiltach. Indianapolis, Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1916.

early as 1768 he was beginning to think of beautifying his grounds, for in that year he expressed a wish to have about his mansion house every possible specimen of native tree or shrub that was noted for beauty of form, leaf, or flower. His observation of beautiful Colonial homes and gardens in various sections of the country during the War, together with the contact of cultured people, both Americans and Europeans, had broadened his love of plants to include a feeling for their use and appearance as part of a broad landscape treatment.

On January 19, 1785, he began to lay out his new plan for the West lawn and "serpentine road" with shade trees of many varieties. He then rarely rode through his woods or pastures without remarking some crab, holly, magnolia, or pine that would serve his purpose. In one entry in April he noted that

the flower of the Sassafras was fully out and looked well—an intermixture of this and Red bud I conceive would look very pretty—the latter crowned with the former or vice versa.

In this same spring he recorded the planting of limes and lindens sent by his good friend Governor Clinton of New York; lilacs, mock oranges, aspen, mulberries, black gums, berried thorns, locusts, sassafras, magnolia, crabs, service berries, catalpas, papaws, honey locusts, a live oak from Norfolk, yews, aspens, swamp berries, hemlocks, twelve horse chestnut sent by "Light Horse Harry" Lee, twelve cuttings of tree box, buckeye nuts brought by him the preceding year from the mouth of Cheat River, eight nuts from a tree called "the Kentucke Coffee tree," a row of shell bark hickory nuts from New York, some filberts from "sister Lewis." His brother John sent him four barrels of holly seeds which he sowed in various parts of the place. But the spring was an exceptionally dry one and he was forced to be absent from home for some days.* He then records that

Most of my transplanted trees have a sickly look.—The small Pines in the Wilderness are entirely dead.—The larger ones in the Walks, for the most part appear to be alive (as yet)—almost the whole of the Holly are dead—many of the Ivy, wch. before looked healthy & well seem to be declining—few of the Crab trees had put forth leaves; not a single Ash tree has unfolded its buds; whether owing to the trees declining or any other cause, I know not . . . The lime trees, which had some appearance of Budding when I went away, are now withering—and the Horse chestnut & Tree box from Colo. Harry Lee's discover little signs of shooting.—the Hemlock is almost entirely dead, & bereft of their leaves;—and so are the live Oak.—In short half the Trees in the Shrubberies & many in the walk are dead & declin[ing].

* *George Washington: Farmer.* By Paul Leland Haworth. Indianapolis, Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1915.

But Washington was not discouraged, for, as he wrote one of his managers on another occasion,

I shall begrudge no reasonable expense that will contribute to the improvement and neatness of my farms, for nothing pleases me better than to see them in good order, and everything trim, handsome, and thriving about them; nor nothing hurts me more than to find them otherwise.

Of all parts of the Mount Vernon estate, the great covered terrace on the river front received more general usage than any other part of the house or grounds. It was the gathering place for the members of the household. It was there that Washington received and entertained great companies of visitors, for his exalted position attracted a constant stream of people who came to pay their respects. No less than thirty Windsor chairs were provided to seat them. When inclement weather forbade his usual outdoor exercise in the fields, it was here that Washington paced for an hour before retiring.

Quite apart from the great homes and gardens were the smaller farms and the town houses of the Colonies. In the country, particularly in the North, we have visions of the farm house, situated in the midst of a trimmed grass area and approached through a grove of maples, locusts, or elms. On one side lies the orchard; the long grass beneath the apples invites us to wade knee deep through it. Gigantic lilacs here and there, and perhaps some specimens of ancient box, have come down from earlier Colonial times. On another side a path leads to a garden, box-walled and redolent of the perfume of the box and the sweet-scented old-fashioned flowers.

The town garden was more sophisticated, as befitted the pleasure grounds of those in the seats of culture, and here we find a greater variety of plants. A Boston newspaper of March 30, 1760, gives us the following list of seeds for sale:*

Lavender	Catchfly
Palma Christi	Wing-peas
Cerinth or Honeywort, loved of bees.	Convolvulus
Tricolor	Strawberry Spinage
Indian Pink	Branching Larkspur
Scarlet Calalia	White Chrysanthemum
Yellow Sultans	Nigella Romano
Lemon African Marigold	Rose Campion
Sensitive Plants	Snap Dragon
White Lupine	Nolana prostrata
Love Lies Bleeding	Summer Savory
Patagonian Cucumber	Hyssop
Lobelia	Red Hawkweed

* *Old-time Gardens*. By Alice Morse Earle. New York, The Macmillan Co., 1901, p. 33.



MOUNT VERNON FROM THE EAST

View Over the Flower Garden

Red and White Lavater
 Scarlet Lupine
 Large blue Lupine
 Snuff flower
 Caterpillars
 Cape Marigold
 Rose Lupine
 Sweet Peas
 Venus' Navelwort
 Yellow Chrysanthemum
 Cyanus minor
 Tall Holyhock
 French Marigold
 Carnation Poppy
 Globe Amaranthus
 Yellow Lupine
 Indian Branching Coxcombs
 Iceplants
 Thyme
 Sweet Marjoram
 Tree Mallows
 Everlasting
 Greek Valerian
 Tree Primrose

Canterbury Bells
 Purple Stock
 Sweet Scabiose
 Columbine
 Pleasant-eyed Pink
 Dwarf Mountain Pink
 Sweet Rocket
 Horn Poppy
 French Honeysuckle
 Bloody Wallflower
 Sweet William
 Honesty (to be sold in small parcels that
 every one may have a little)
 Persicaria
 Polyanthos
 50 Different Sorts of mixed Tulip Roots
 Ranunculus
 Gladiolus
 Starry Scabiose
 Curled Mallows
 Painted Lady topknot peas
 Colchicum
 Persian Iris
 Star Bethlehem

In the gardens of the more pretentious houses could be found plants imported directly from the Old World. A page from an old letter written by Mr. Thomas Hancock, well-to-do Boston merchant and uncle of the better-known John Hancock, gives us a pretty picture of these contacts.*

My Trees and Seeds for Capt. Bennett Came Safe to Hand and I like them very well. I Return you my hearty Thanks for the Plumb Tree and Tulip Roots you were pleased to make me a Present off, which are very Acceptable to me. I have Sent my friend Mr. Wilks a mmo. to procure for me 2 or 3 Doz. Yew Trees, Some Hollys and Jessamine Vines, and if you have Any Particular Curious Things not of a high Price, will Beautifye a flower Garden Send a Sample with the Price or a Catalogue of 'em, I do not intend to spare Any Cost or Pains in making my Gardens Beautifull or Profitable.

P. S. The Tulip Roots you were Pleased to make a present off to me are all Dead as well.

New York, Philadelphia, and the Far South were no less active during the Colonial period in their development of garden and home. Let us see in greater detail what were the characteristics of these developments and how they differed one from another.

BRADFORD WILLIAMS.

* From *Bulletin of the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities*, July, 1926.

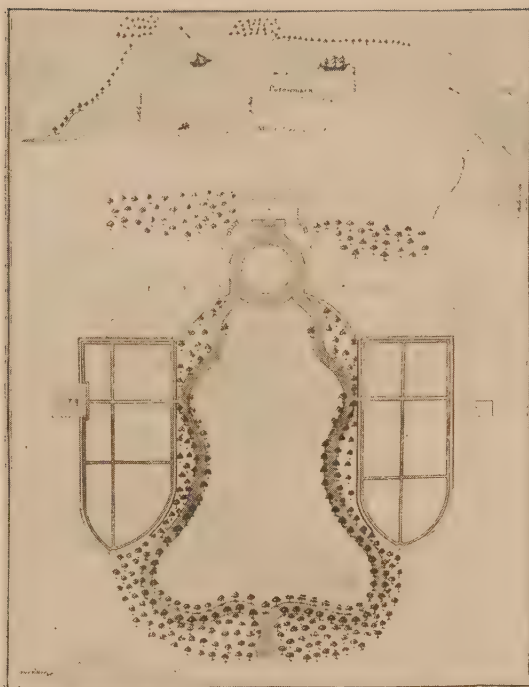
CHAPTER III

Mount Vernon and Other Colonial Places of the South

George Washington and his Virginia neighbors were not commuters or trippers. There were no railroads or fast boats. Horses were the speediest motive power for travel, but they could not make more than seven to nine miles an hour either under saddle or harnessed to the carts, chariots, or coaches. A Sunday afternoon trip on the rough, dusty, or muddy roads of those days did not tempt men to be joy-riders. Travel was the hardest kind of work and it was costly of money and time. The man who was sturdy enough to endure the hardships of travel was either looked up to for his strength, or looked down upon for his folly. He was at best a squanderer of time unless he went on urgent business, and he was a spendthrift unless he roamed like a tramp. Primitive transportation conditions kept men at home. The grandee, as well as the artisan who worked at carpentering, shoemaking, blacksmithing, or harness-making, was tied down to life in one place, and that place was home. This confinement was not considered a hardship, because no other kind of life was possible except to the traveler, whose lot was slow and hard.

In the villages and towns a man could find a carpenter or a smith to work for him, and his servants could walk to him. Provisions could be bought at shops. Good books could be borrowed or bought here and there up and down the street. Friends met on the street corners, at the inn, or at church. To the man who lived in the country, however, isolation was inevitable. The need to be a Jack-of-all-trades was universal. The well-to-do man could escape from being a carpenter, blacksmith, or cobbler to his own needs only by creating a community of such helpers in his own dooryard. He must either dip candles and smoke bacon or he must keep men at hand to do that work for him. He could not depend, as we do to-day, upon the store or upon the mail-order. He could not buy clothes ready made, or machinery, or wheat ready threshed, nor flour, shoes, cloth, butter, meat. All must be produced at home.

These conditions of life were common in England as well as in our country in Washington's day. His forbears, when they did not live in villages, were well acquainted with the all-round life of the farm. They had the ability and the knowledge needed to turn their hands to self-



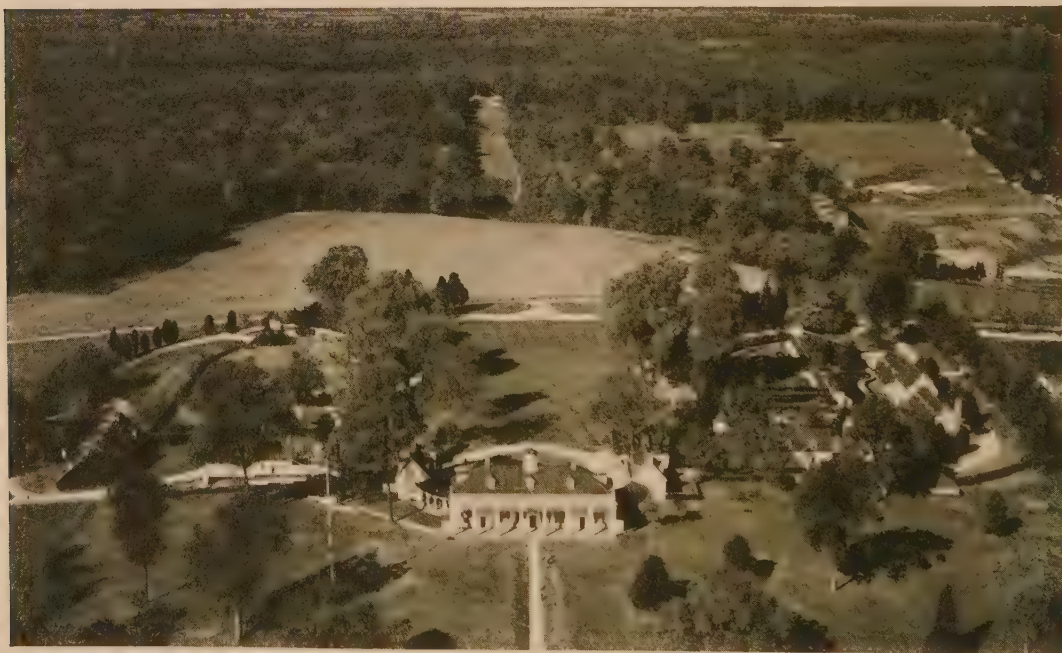
Courtesy of the Library of Congress

Plan

Reference.

- a. The Mansion House.
- b. Smiths Shop.
- c. White Servants apartment
- d. Kitchen.
- e. Repository for Dung.
- f. Spinning House
- g.
- h. Maker & Taylors appartm.
- i. Store House &c.
- k. Smoak House.
- l. Wash House.
- m. Couch Houses
- n. Quarters for Families.
- o. o. o. Stables.
- p. p. p. Necessaries.
- q. Green House.
- r. r. Cow Houses.
- s. Barn & Carpenters Shop.
- t. School Room.
- u. Summer House.
- w. Dairy Kitchen Gardens.

Key to the Plan



The Plan in Perspective, showing Mansion and Gardens from the Southeast

THE PLAN OF MOUNT VERNON

sustained labor. In his boyhood Washington lived on a farm. In his ripe manhood he chose a farmer's life at Mount Vernon with full realization of all the labor and coöperation which that life entailed. Farms of great size were called "plantations" in Virginia and the South.

Enough has been said to indicate that Washington's home at Mount Vernon could not have resembled the modern gentleman's place. Our modern gentleman's place reflects the life of a man who has the world at his beck and call through the railroad, motor road, telegraph, telephone, postal system, and a great transportation structure. At Mount Vernon we find vastly more interesting things than a good house, a garage, a barn for horses and cows, an electric water supply, a lawn with a rubber hose, and a garden. We find, as we should expect, a very large acreage of cultivated land and of woodland sufficient to sustain the Washington household and all the workers. In Washington's time there were large herds of sheep and cattle, many draught and saddle horses, swine and fowls. Nearly a hundred plantation laborers were engaged in ploughing, cultivating, harvesting, threshing, grinding, smoking meat, pumping water, grooming horses and shoeing oxen, building carts, ploughs, farm gear, making harness, and carrying on all the thousand interesting activities necessary for the support of the laborers and of their master. There were extensive flower and box gardens which were in scale with the needs of the immediate family, but the gardens for produce were in scale with the needs of the hundreds of artisans and laborers and their families. Scores of buildings were needed to shelter these workers, to house the animals, tools, wagons, coaches, and the shops of the carpenters, blacksmiths, cobblers, and overseers.

The modest size of the Washington mansion and its simple practical architectural design attest the caliber of the man who made Mount Vernon a delight to all those, including the humblest, who dwelt there. Washington's interest in the loveliness of Mount Vernon did not absorb him to such a degree as to make him forget its practical use. The skill with which the house and grounds were arranged to meet the needs of the Virginia climate, a hilly topography, and the operation of a great plantation mark him as a man of broad understanding. The needs of a gentle family and of a circle of cultivated friends coming from the ends of the English- and French-speaking world were met also by Mount Vernon, but not to the exclusion of the needs of the great plantation.

The accompanying pictures and the plan of Mount Vernon show the orderly grouping of the mansion and its near gardens and those few plantation buildings which still stand after the lapse of over a century. The

stately approach is shown. The trees which were planted by Washington's own hand are shown and they tally in location and in kind with the methodical description of them which he entered in his journals, with notes regarding the weather at the times of planting, the day and month, and the probable usefulness of the species to other planters. Washington was the first American to study farming and gardening from a scientific point of view to increase the yield and to improve the quality.

The mansion was placed on high ground which overlooked the Potomac River and which at the same time permitted an axial view of the house itself to be seen from the straight approach of about a half mile. This high ground was gentle in slope on the side toward the garden, but abrupt on the side toward the stables, coach house, cow yard, and the near pastures. Though moderate in size, the mansion thus overlooked and pleasantly dominated the plantation. This result was not accomplished by bold cutting or filling of the ground or by sacrificing the convenience of the daily life of the great farm. It was accomplished by a diligent search of the countryside to find this site which lent itself to all practical needs and also to a stately appearance. Pleasantness of outlook and attractiveness of ground at the very door were found.

The flower or box garden was made on level ground and it conformed along its curved edge to the shape of the approach lawn. On the opposite side the edge of the balancing garden and paddock exactly mated with the curve of the garden. Though partly curving, the garden was laid out without an attempt to secure a "natural" effect. Walls, fences, and outbuildings hemmed it in. The paths ran parallel to these. The box hedges and the rows of trees in the garden followed the lines of the paths. Every line was simple and understandable. To-day, after all the decades which have passed, its simplicity, its freedom from "smartness," and its intimate relation to its own work buildings and to the mansion make it an appealing vision of use and loveliness. Not striving for attention, it attains the ideals of a garden which was made to satisfy mind and heart.

The widely dispersed arrangement of buildings and gardens at Mount Vernon would not have been practical for use in a cold climate like that of New England, but in warm Virginia buildings are more conveniently used and are more comfortable when widely separated. The symmetrical placing of the wings and outbuildings at Mount Vernon is characteristic of Virginia planning; irregular placing of wing buildings and ells as used in New England was not considered practical or pleasant in Virginia.

If we compare the Virginia places of Washington's time with places in England, the Virginia places were in general as large or larger, some-



Courtesy of Mount Vernon Ladies' Association

Photograph by Leet Brothers

The Flower Garden



The Vegetable Garden

THE GARDENS AT MOUNT VERNON

what less in cost, less complete in detail, built in many cases for as great permanency, not mellowed by time of course or by history, but rapidly mellowed by a bland atmosphere. Virginia houses and outbuildings were often built of brick but not of half-timbered work. Though wood was at hand, brick was generously used for construction. Retaining-walls were rare, but walls for seclusion, if not for privacy, were common. Courtyards were infrequent. Crofts (called "yards") were almost universal. Long axial vistas and long axial approaches were also almost universal in Virginia country places and farms.

The preservation of the mansion, the gardens, and a very large acreage of Mount Vernon has been accomplished. This patriotic achievement has been brought about by a group of ladies, the Mount Vernon Ladies' Association of the Union, who raised the necessary funds for the purchase and who maintain Mount Vernon for the instruction and the delight of the Nation. The United States Government has just completed the construction of a National Parkway leading from Washington to the edge of the Mount Vernon domain. This modern road and the great parking spaces do not enter the interior of the grounds, but they permit visitors on leaving their cars to approach the mansion and the gardens by a walk of two or three minutes.

Symmetry in the placing of outbuildings in Virginia at this Washingtonian period is seen at "Stratford," the ancient Lee place on the lower Potomac. Stratford owes its preservation, first, to the permanence of the brick which forms its massive walls, and second, to the efforts of those who have guarded it as a memorial of the Lee family and of General Robert E. Lee. General Lee spent his boyhood there. In his later life he often referred to his memories of the place with a feeling of tenderness which is strong in Southern men. These men understand deeply the significance of the old plantations in the history of our country.

Reference to a plan of this remarkable place would show the perfect axial balance of the near "kitchen" on the right and the "cottage" on the left. The balance of the "old school" and the "office" left and right on the far side of the mansion is no less striking. In ancient times the Potomac was opened to the view of the mansion by the removal of the trees which now hide the river. The Daughters of the Confederacy are restoring Stratford to the condition in which General Lee knew it and adored it. An impression of the appearance of the old garden as it will appear when restored to somewhat of its old glory is given in the accompanying drawing.



Courtesy of Virginia State Chamber of Commerce

Stratford Hall



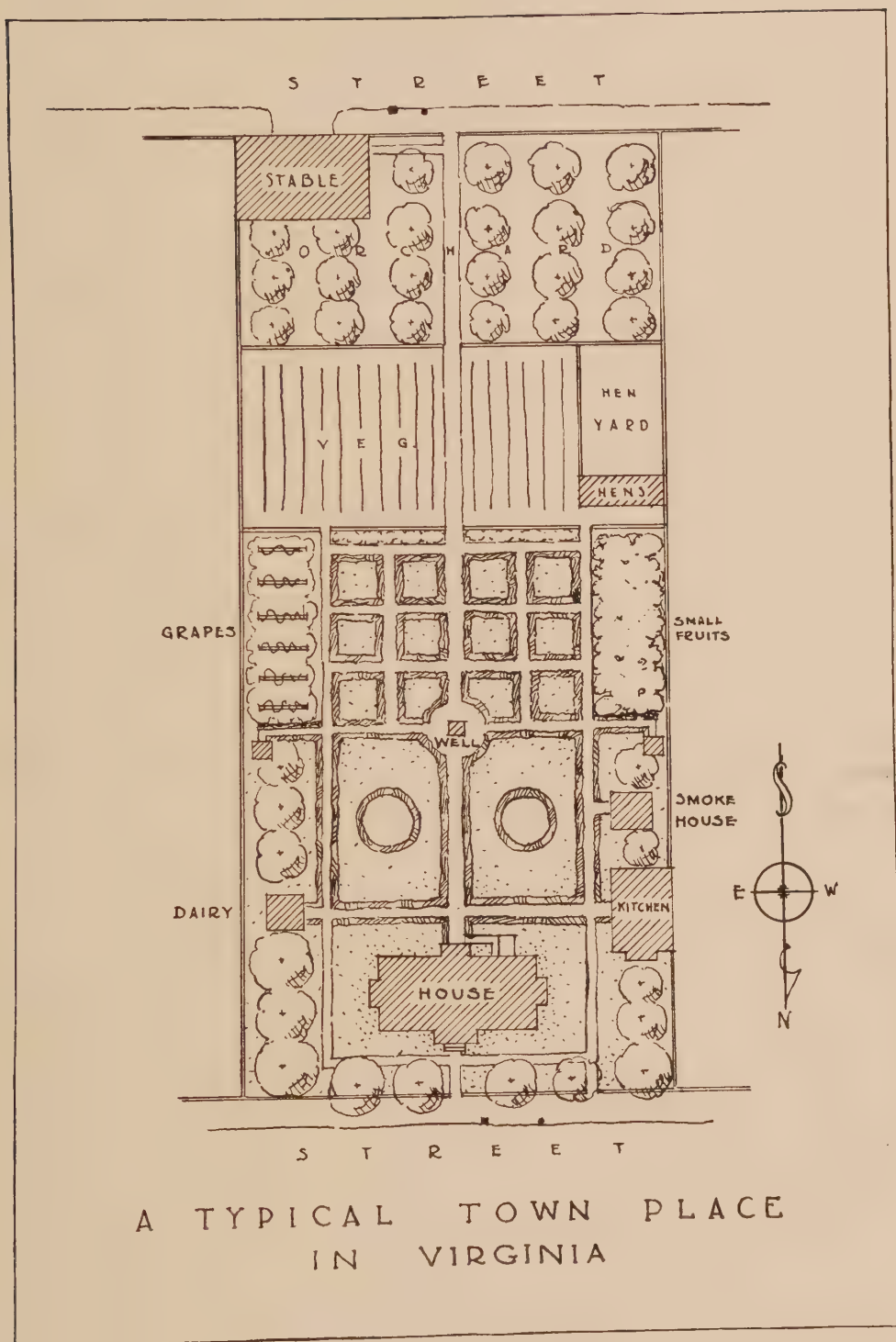
Courtesy of Mrs. Fairfax Harrison

Proposed Restoration of the Garden
STRATFORD

The old garden which is to be restored was rectangular. No attempt was made in those days to copy that wilderness of woods, brushland, winding path, and irregular pasturage which surrounded the mansion. Pleasure lay in a garden which showed man's control of that wilderness. Around the garden were walls, the many outbuildings, and the impressive towering pile of the mansion. Straight paths, hedges straight or arranged in the simple geometric patterns of those days, straight rows of old-time trees, and flowers of old kinds arranged in the manner of the Southland,—all these were a part of the picture. Box hedges bordered many of the paths. No one could upon other ground copy such a garden or make a new one like it. Without the presence of the old mansion itself, without the facts of the ancient design upon the true site, without the ancient trees, and without the traditions of the Lee family culminating in the affection which General Lee held for this now sacred plot of ground, there could be no garden like this one.

In the reader's mind the question will arise at once as to what were the surroundings and the plans of the small place of the Virginia man of relatively small means at the time of Washington and upon the small plots of ground in towns where there could be no large acreage for development. Brief study shows that all the utility areas and the utility structures which made existence possible to the isolated places are present (on a small scale to be sure), but the buildings for the journeymen carpenters, smiths, and cobblers are absent, because those artisans were available in the town.

In the small lots of the Virginia towns (lots of about 100 feet frontage and having two or three times as great a depth) we find that the house is usually placed about at the middle of the front street line and set back to give a small fenced dooryard. A central door at the back opens upon a path which leads to the rear of the lot and usually abounds with right-angled or nearly right-angled paths branching to lateral buildings always set on or very near the sides of the lot. These buildings include a kitchen combined with a servant's room, a smoke house, dairy, wood house, necessities, a barn for cows and horses, a hen house and yard, a well-house, and other structures. Sometimes, as shown in the accompanying plan, a fence was arranged across the lot near the house to enclose a garden or a working yard alongside the rear of the house. Sometimes the garden lay near the house. There were usually rows of fruit trees and a vegetable garden. The charm of these small intensively developed places, with widely spread and somewhat symmetrically placed



outbuildings, fences, paths, and trees, is manifest. In many towns the use of box in the gardens was almost universal.

Among these small places, as in the great plantations, there was no attempt to secure "natural" appearing grounds by the use of scattered beds of shrubbery, scattered trees, winding paths, or irregular lawns. No attempt was made to build rambling houses of picturesque appearance. Sometimes when the original house became inadequate through the size of a growing family, wings and ells were added. These often varied the symmetry of the original house plan and its elevation. Picturesque building groups thus came into existence, but they came by indirection to meet a need and not with the aim to make a fanciful or picturesque effect. Similarly a certain departure from symmetry creeps into the gardens, but not by first intention.

Washington's interest in trees and shrubbery did not single him out among Virginians and men of other parts of the South. All Southern men have shown great interest in such matters. The letters of Colonial times and the diaries refer constantly to the names of plants and to their origin. From these scattered sources, from Washington's own journals, and from the ancient plants which we find growing in the old places, we are able to gather lists of trees, shrubbery, and flowers which indicate the flora of the old places. Within the limits of this chapter copies of these lists cannot be included.

In general, in Colonial times in the South they depended on the natural flora of the country though they imported some plants from England, France, Spain, and the Mediterranean. In those days, the vast number of plants originating in Africa, China, Japan, and California were unknown. To many persons these horticultural limitations add especial interest to the ancient Southern gardens. Nowadays you will find many who are discarding "modern" flowers, trees, and shrubs in the effort to make their flora correspond to the one with which George Washington and his contemporaries were familiar.

A glance at the generous Southern places with their many buildings for the offices of the household gives a hint of the hospitality of the Southern man. He took pains also to arrange his approaches and to place his gardens with an eye to the good appearance of the house and the pleasantness of home. He built his place with thought for the comfort and the delight of friends. Certainly there is no part of our country in which hospitality shows itself more fully and more sincerely than in the South.

ARTHUR A. SHURCLIFF.

CHAPTER IV

Gardens and Places of Colonial Philadelphia

The Eighteenth Century marks a period of prosperity for Philadelphia that might be said to have reached a culmination when the city was selected as the seat of our newly established Federal Government. Located in a country rich in natural resources, and settled by thrifty, industrious people, the community developed rapidly. Commerce, wealth, and culture combined to make it foremost among the cities of the North American colonies, and developed among its citizens that degree of elegance and civility which is ever manifested in a greater regard for gardens as an ultimate expression of culture and refinement.

Colonial Philadelphia was more sparsely built up than our modern suburban towns, and so is comparable to these rather than to a city. Contrary to the tendency of modern suburban zoning laws, Philadelphia houses of Colonial days usually were built directly on the street, although the lots were large, sometimes comprising several acres. High enclosing walls gave the greater privacy desirable for city residences, and the maximum area of the lot was left for the use and enjoyment of the owner. With the growth of the city the gardens have disappeared, but fortunately many of the houses are still standing, and bear witness to ancient prosperity.

The view of Washington's residence at 190 (now 528) Market Street gives a good idea of the appearance of old Philadelphia, though it reveals nothing of the arrangement of grounds other than house site and drive entrance. Presumably there was a garden, a stable, and possibly other structures, but we have still to discover landscape plans of this or any other city home, and so we must rely upon descriptions to give us an idea of the appearance of the grounds. Washington's residence is gone, but the Powel house, where he was a constant visitor, still stands. We may never hope to see the replica of the extensive grounds surrounding it, adorned with allées and statuary, with orange, lemon, and citron trees and other exotics.

Confining our discussion of town houses to two further examples, one of the earlier, the other of the later Eighteenth Century, we find that Clarke Hall, built about 1700, was laid out "in the old style of uniformity,

with walks and alleys nodding to their brothers." Such a description clearly indicates a formal, symmetrical plan. The Bingham house on Third Street above Spruce was built about 1790, after a visit that the owner made to London. A description which says: "The grounds about the house, beautifully diversified with walks, statuary, shade trees and parterres," would indicate gardening of the formal type; while another reference using the term "clump," a familiar form of planting developed under the naturalesque influence of 18th-century England, indicates an informal arrangement. The lot was of sufficient extent to permit both types of embellishment.

In Germantown the lots were narrow but extended far back in the country for farming purposes. The houses were built close to, or directly on, the one existing street, and a community developed that appeared closely built. Low walls or fences gave enclosure and presented a less conventionalized aspect than did the high garden walls of Philadelphia, but as a type we may class them the same, owing to the constricted character of the grounds in proximity to the houses.

Among the more famous places in Germantown that still retain a portion of their old grounds, "Wister's Big House" (1744), "Cliveden" (1761), and "Wyck" (1690) are the best known. Cliveden was the country seat of Chief Justice Chew, but we have no records that give us any satisfactory picture of the grounds as they existed in his day. It is not known when the garden was built at Wyck, but its "old style" suggests greater age than any documentary evidence proves, and we may believe that it existed when Washington lived in Germantown.

While the garden at Wister's Big House, better known perhaps as "Grumblethorpe," has suffered neglect, it was well kept up until comparatively recent years. The squares formed by box-bordered walks are a usual motif of gardens dating from the earlier half of the Eighteenth Century. (An exceptionally well-preserved one is at "Ury House," Fox Chase.) Such gardens were not necessarily flower gardens, but sometimes were used for fruits or vegetables as well. In an old record book are Daniel Wister's notes carefully listing Carnations, Tulips, Narcissus, etc., in accordance with "beds" in which they were planted; so, although we do not know when it was originally built, we have an authentic record for the years 1773-1776.

Scattered widely around the Philadelphia district, country places were developed not only for permanent residence but for sojourning. In these we find examples indicating the probability that definite plans were made, but only one actual plan has been found,—that of "Solitude,"



WASHINGTON'S MANSION

R. MORRIS MANSION

Courtesy of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania

Washington's Residence, Philadelphia



Courtesy of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania

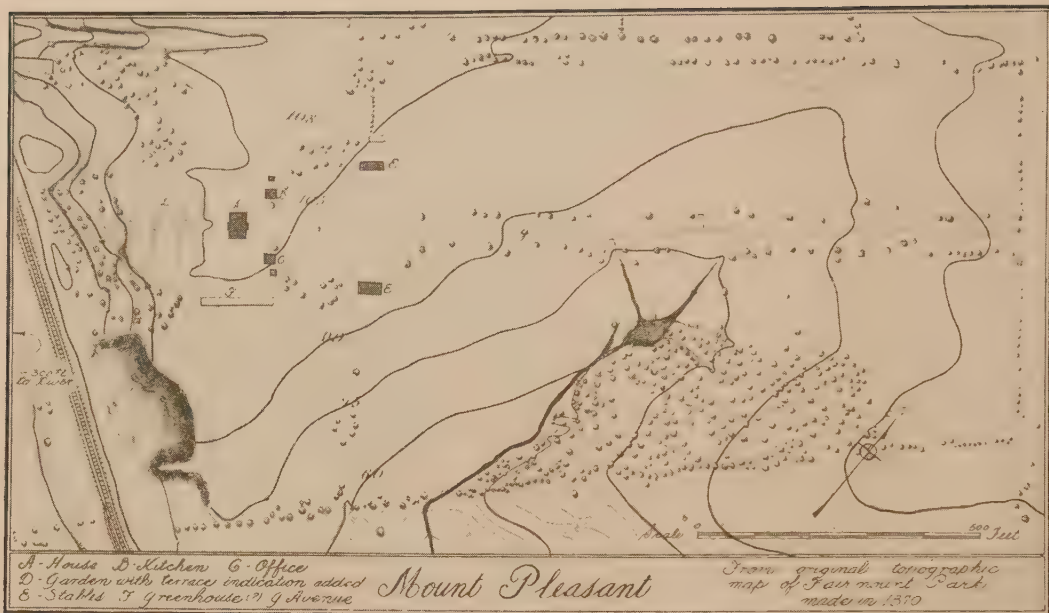
"Wister's Big House," Germantown

HOMES OF THE OLD PHILADELPHIA REGION

an estate on the west bank of the Schuylkill about two miles from City Hall. It is now the site of the Zoölogical Gardens. John Penn, born and bred in England, came to America in 1784, being concerned with family claims. With apparent intent to remain, he built Solitude shortly after his arrival. Penn's taste for the English fashion of landscape gardening is quite evident, with the "ha-ha" wall, the irregular flower garden, the "vista" south of the house, and the clump of trees east of the house. All these features bespeak "Capability" Brown and the "landscape gardeners" of contemporary times in England. Solitude is not American, but many of its English fashions had already appeared here, and more were destined to hold supremacy in landscape design of the Nineteenth Century. Though essentially foreign, mention of Solitude is warranted if only as a striking example of the lasting quality of planned landscape. The map of Fairmount Park made in 1870 clearly shows the ha-ha wall, the vistas, and the "clump," and the limits of developed property are identical with the original map. The establishment of the Zoölogical Gardens has destroyed all but the dwelling house.

The same lasting quality of planned landscape is seen in the topographic map of "Mount Pleasant," made in 1870. Mount Pleasant, built in 1761 by John McPherson, on the opposite bank of the Schuylkill and a mile or so higher up, is known as the Arnold Mansion, but Benedict Arnold, though owner, probably never occupied it. The extent of the grounds is quite apparent in the 1870 map, as well as the development of mansion grounds distinct from the farm lands. Full advantage is taken here of the necessity for numerous buildings by grouping them as a termination for the long straight entrance drive. The rows of trees along this drive had lost their regularity of spacing by 1870, but the formality of the scheme is evident. West of the house the contours clearly show the terraced garden which was replanted a few years ago (under the supervision of the Pennsylvania Museum) and so has again assumed a semblance of its original state.

Perhaps no country place was more familiar to Washington than "Belmont," the home of Judge Richard Peters, Commissioner of War during the Revolution. Belmont Mansion is almost directly opposite Mount Pleasant, overlooking a broad reach of the river. Peters inherited this property from his father who, about 1755, erected a new house adjacent to the old one. Apparently the old house faced a garden, and the advantage of this prospect, together with the advantage of relationship to an existing development, may be reason for the close proximity of the two buildings as we see them to-day. More recent extensions and



Courtesy of the Pennsylvania Museum of Art, Philadelphia

The Mansion from the Flower Garden
 MOUNT PLEASANT

additions have created a confused hodge-podge of structures, and there is almost nothing to indicate how the gardens or grounds were arranged. From old descriptions of the gardens we know that there were two summer houses, a green, a labyrinth, a wilderness, and "a most perfect sample of the old taste of Parterres."^{*} There was also a famous avenue of hemlocks, not less than a quarter of a mile long, which terminated at a masonry obelisk. Extending from the house to the river was another avenue of cherry trees. In all, Judge Peters' taste was evidently one that appreciated the formal manner, rather than the more "modern" fashions, though he included the feature of a "wilderness," a naturalesque type of garden with shrubs and trees.

We cannot omit mention of Bartram's Garden, for none of the several arboretums established in the neighborhood of Philadelphia in the Eighteenth Century is so famous or so well preserved. With his chief interest centered in establishing a collection of plants, we doubt whether Bartram considered the arrangement of the grounds as carefully as one less interested in arboriculture. Conventionality is apparent in terraces close by his house, but the general aspect of his property was undoubtedly naturalesque.

An elaborate description remains of the gardens developed by John Cruickshank in 1770 at "The Grange" in Haverford Township.

Nothing could be more picturesque, beautiful and elegant than this highly favored spot. The gardens, the fountains, the Bath in a private garden with walks skirted with boxwood and the trumpet creeper in rich luxuriance overhanging the door and gateways, where the water was so intensely cold that few entered in. The Green houses and Hot houses, the Dairy, the extensive orchards of every variety of fruit; and then the long dark walk seven-eighths of a mile in extent, shaded by tall forest trees, where the tulip poplar abounded, and where the sun scarcely dared to penetrate. On one side a ravine through which a creek flowed, gurgling, and reflecting the sun beams shut out from the dark walk, with the sloping meadows beyond, all presenting a picture never to be forgotten. Near the beginning of this dark walk Mr. Ross [son-in-law of John Cruickshank] had caused to be constructed, on a spot ten or twelve feet above the walk, a seat capable of holding twenty persons and a place for a table. On the Fourth of July and other warm days of summer he would take his friends there and iced wine would be served. A bell wire, communicating with the house, was arranged to call the servant when wanted and avoid his constant presence.^{**}

The "Bath" was within a building, part of whose walls still stand. The formal garden by the house was in three terraces whose lengths ran parallel to the main prospect from the house. Walks on two terraces were terminated by openings in the high enclosing end-wall, giving a wide

^{*} From the original manuscript letter of Deborah Logan in the possession of the Pennsylvania Historical Society.

^{**} From a letter written by Miss Elizabeth Mifflin, granddaughter of John Ross.

view over the country. Such features, known as "clair-voyées," are said to have been introduced to England from Holland in the Seventeenth Century. The Grange was famous for its hospitality, and Washington was numbered among the guests upon one occasion at least, when tradition says that upon his departure he collided violently with one of the gate posts.

In conclusion, we find that, where communities develop with people of similar ideals and a common cultural and religious background, as in Virginia, there is a similarity of expression that is lacking where, as in the district of which Philadelphia was the center, such a miscellaneous assortment of nationalities as Swedes, Welsh, Germans, and English colonize. The religious beliefs of these settlers were even more varied than their nationalities, but the problem of existence created a spirit of community, and a fairly rapid development of an architectural style is apparent.

In landscape design there is less that may be considered typical. The self-dependence which pioneer life imposed upon the people required a greater number of buildings for residence in the country than is the case to-day, and the Colonists' first concern was the relationship of these to each other and to the site. An orderly arrangement was sought, and this order, related to the irregularities of rolling country, by no means tended toward a symmetrical grouping of buildings. It is questionable whether great consideration would be given to such architectural grouping where the majority of places were the result of gradual growth with a gradual accumulation of wealth. Such a pretentious development as Mount Pleasant signifies the possession of wealth at the outset and a regard for country living as recreation.

Avenues of trees and formal gardens retained their popularity in a land so close to wilderness, even after the romantic fashions of 18th-century England began to be adopted. In America there was no surfeit of conventionality that cried for relief.

One type of garden alone reappears to a degree that may make us consider it characteristic, although this perhaps belongs more properly to the first half of the Eighteenth Century: the simple box-bordered squares forming a geometrical pattern. At least it combines practical considerations with esthetic possibilities; adaptable to the confines of a small lot, its development was possible with a minimum amount of grading. The square enclosures were large enough to devote to small fruits or vegetables, or could at any time be transformed into a box-patterned knot or a flower garden; or by the simple expedient of com-



Clair-voyée on lower terrace of garden



Garden walk on the upper terrace
THE GRANGE



Simple box-bordered squares at "Wister's Big House" in the late 1890's



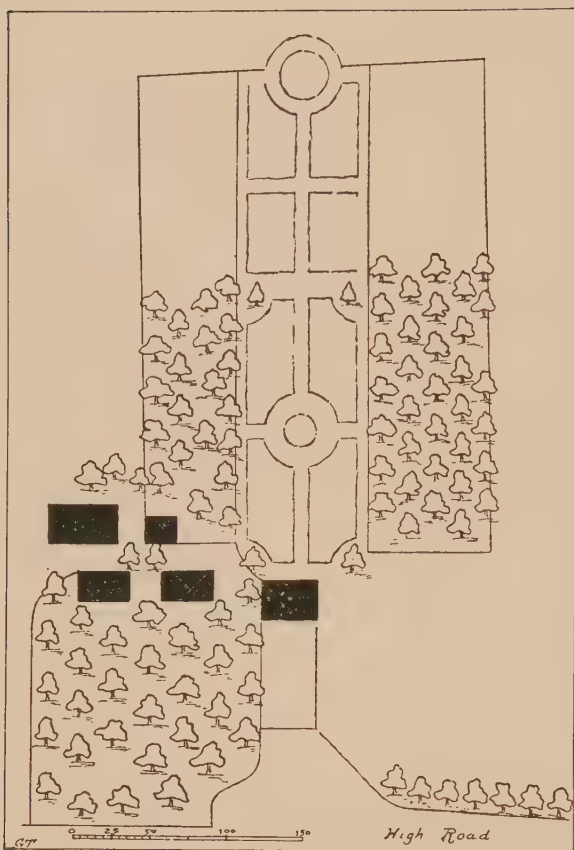
A box-patterned knot at Ury House, Fox Chase, Pennsylvania
TWO ANCIENT GARDENS OF THE PHILADELPHIA REGION

binning a circular central bed with four surrounding square beds, a more effective pattern was developed.

The latter half of the Eighteenth Century witnessed more elaborate developments in landscape design, and of surprising variety. A catholicity of taste is apparent. Earlier tradition has not been ruthlessly cast aside where practical considerations favor conventionality, nor was conventionality of plan enforced where nature offered the greatest opportunities for embellishment in the romantic spirit of landscape gardening.

In the Philadelphia region at least, our forefathers showed discrimination in their gardens that is uncommon to-day. They accepted that which was sound in the English theories of the Eighteenth Century without discarding the equally sound traditions of earlier Colonial days that harked back to Tudor England.

ROBERT WHEELWRIGHT.



GARDENS OF NEW AMSTERDAM

Somerndick's *Bouwerie*

From a "plan of the north-east environs of the city of New York, performed by the order of his Excellency, the Earl of Loudon, &c., &c., by Sam'l Holland, 17th Sept., 1757," reproduced from *Old-fashioned Gardening*

Courtesy of Robert M. McBride & Co.



The White Hall
Governor Stuyvesant's City House

From the *Cosmopolitan*, January, 1892

CHAPTER V

Homes and Gardens of Old New York

The region of New York has always been identified with the richest examples of old-time gardens and country places. In the early days the situation of the city itself was distinctively beautiful. With its wide harbor with long water views, its shores with luxuriant vegetation and thickly wooded slopes, its lowlands with background of rolling country and lofty hills, Manhattan Island had every possible variety of the most attractive scenery. The Hudson River, flowing past Manhattan on the west, one of the most beautiful water courses in the world, has been bordered for many generations with some of the finest country homes to be found in the United States.

In Washington's time New York was easily one of the most consequential settlements in the country. While its size—a population of some 20,000 at the time of the Revolution—had not grown to be impressive, its importance was nevertheless significant. As early as 1748 a visitor (Peter Kalm, the Swedish botanist) mentioned "its fine buildings" and "its opulence." The streets were spacious and most of them were paved. The chief trees were the locust and "Water Beech, or Linnæus's *Platanus occidentalis*",* and there were also many lime (linden) and elm which roofed the sidewalks.

At the time of the Revolution, the greater part of the country places were situated on Manhattan Island bordering the East and Hudson Rivers, though there were a few also on Long Island. In 1774 John Adams, stopping in New York on his way to attend the first Congress in Philadelphia, gave expression to his admiration of the "elegant country seats on the Island."**

The majority of the wealthy citizens of Manhattan were interested in the shipping business, and many lived in considerable luxury. It was an era of particularly good taste and refinement which showed itself in the character of the homes, both in their architectural design and in their outdoor cultivation. Describing this period, an author writes (in 1871): "There was in that day none of the show and glitter of modern times,

* *Travels into North America.* By Peter Kalm. London, 1772.

** *The Olden Time in New York.* By W. I. Kip. New York, 1872.

but with many of the (New York) families . . . an elegance which has never been rivaled in other parts of the country.”*

In the time of the early settlement of New Amsterdam, the first home grounds of Dutch New York were naturally of limited scale. The city itself was compressed into a small space, surrounded by a stockade for protection against the Indians. The dwellings were set close to the street line, usually with the gable end fronting the street, and often there was no space between them. The plots were not large and the garden areas were more or less confined. Within such a limited space and in conformity with Dutch precision, the gardens were laid out symmetrically, consisting primarily of straight paths and rectangular beds with perhaps an occasional departure from straight lines to form circular or curved details. The Castello Plan of New Amsterdam, made in 1660, shows occasional garden layouts, some of which have fairly ornate designs, but these plans were probably drawn largely from the artist's imagination rather than from known details. After all, New Amsterdam was primitive, and utility was the most important consideration, means being not abundant to indulge in great luxury or decoration.

In these gardens were planted fruit trees and vegetables, and flowers were planted with them, in some cases perhaps in separate beds, but in others between the vegetable rows. Holland, the most advanced European country of the time, was noted for its cultivation of flowers and fruits, and the ships of the West India Company brought many of them to this country. The love of the Dutch for flowers and their knowledge of them, their tendency toward regular and formal garden design, their preciseness which enabled them to make the most out of the smallest area of ground,—all this undoubtedly had great influence on the later Colonial gardens which followed.

Although Holland relinquished New Netherlands to the English in 1664, the Dutch influence on the home life, architecture, and gardens of the Colony continued well beyond the early part of the Eighteenth Century.

Apart from the simple homes of the average settlers in old New York and the country places of the well-to-do, the institution of the Manorial Estates had a great bearing on the life of the times. In the early settlement of New Netherlands, privileges were granted to individuals which would permit them to take up land sixteen miles on one side of the river (Hudson) or one-half that distance on both sides, extend-

* *The Olden Time in New York*. By W. I. Kip. New York, 1872.



The old mansion

MAIZELAND—A COLONIAL ESTATE ON THE HUDSON



Courtesy of Doubleday, Doran & Co.

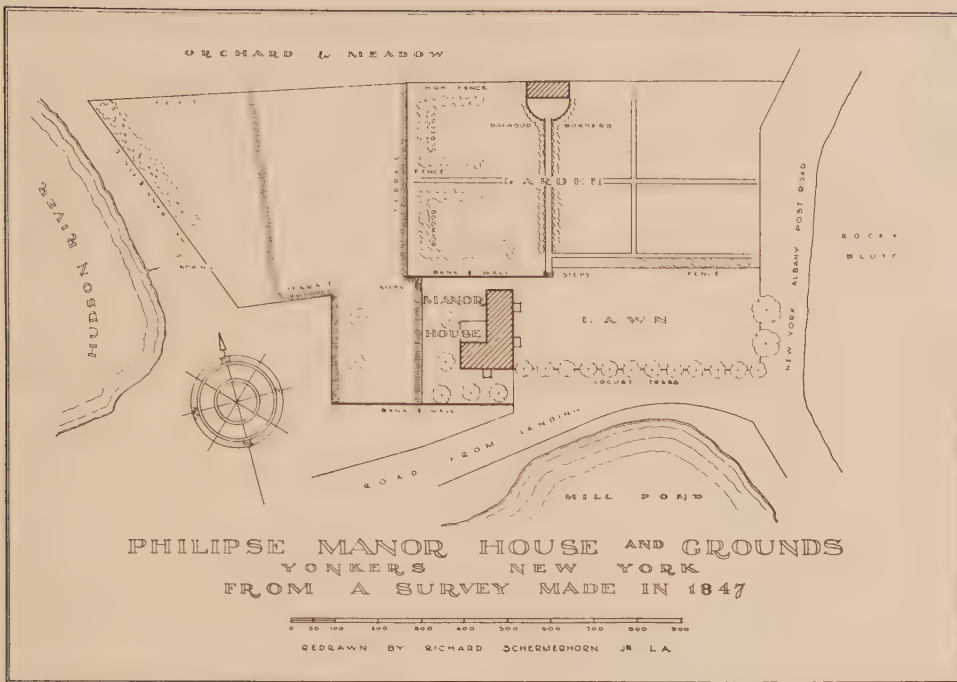
The pleasure, a grass-covered avenue

ing "so far into the country as the situation of the occupiers will permit,"*—under the condition that each "Patroon" should plant a colony of fifty souls above fifteen years of age. A number of such manors were established along the river, which were remarkable on account of the vastness of their domains, the most noted being those of Van Rensselaer, Van Cortlandt, Livingston, and Philipse. The Van Rensselaer Manor was the only one to be more than temporarily successful, but all of these estates were memorable and their proprietors wielded great influence. Other large land grants were awarded in New York during these early periods, and the homes of their owners were of corresponding elegance.

During the period of Washington many of these manorial estates were still flourishing. In aspect and character they differed to a considerable degree from the plantation estates of the South. The character of the Northern country, especially along the Hudson River, was bolder and more rugged. Apart from the difference in physical characteristics, the Northern system of development was entirely unlike that of the South. While there were slaves in the North, they were comparatively few, and the lands were cultivated principally by tenants. The domestic grounds of the patroons' estates and those of the lesser large-property holders were presumably in most cases laid out after the style of the English Park. The scale was so great, the landscape so imposing, the topography so irregular, that attempts at pronounced formal design in the arrangement of the grounds would have been in most cases incongruous. But what these manor-house grounds lacked in symmetry of design as compared with those of the Southern plantations, they made up in their wonderful natural and cultivated woodlands, in their broad sweeping vistas over hill and valley, and in their magnificent space and scale.

While treating in some detail of the homes and gardens of New York during the Washington period, or particularly that just previous to the Revolution, it is necessary to dwell primarily upon the more pretentious country seats because it is of these that we have the clearest record. In their gardening features they were naturally models for the smaller home grounds, and without doubt they influenced the style of gardens in general. During the later Eighteenth Century there was a decided tendency to depart from the formal style then in fashion; instead, the naturalistic English style became popular. Nevertheless, the Georgian type of architecture of the period fostered formal garden design, and this was found in most instances. A description of the main characteristics of

* *Old-fashioned Gardening*. By Grace Tabor. New York, 1913.



A garden that Washington often visited



Courtesy of Charles W. Leavitt & Son

The "naturalistic" English style—a place at Duaneburgh, New York, about 1800

TWO COUNTRY SEATS OF THE NEW YORK REGION

some of the more important country places should help to picture the general garden conditions of the period.

In 1745, when the Philipse Manor House grounds (in Yonkers) were improved by the grandson of the original owner, a formal garden with box-bordered paths was laid out adjacent to the house. Every available tree and plant which would grow in the climate was imported and planted. Landscape gardening was the hobby of Frederick Philipse, the third Lord of the Manor, and it is possible that Washington who was a frequent visitor and at one time a suitor for the daughter, Mary Philipse, may have recalled the gardens of Frederick Philipse when making plans for the ultimate development of Mount Vernon.

Van Cortlandt Manor contained two individual estates at this time, one located at Kingsbridge and the other at Croton. The original Manor contained 200,000 acres. Both Manor Houses still stand. The former is now within the New York City park system, but the grounds have been changed to such an extent that the original condition cannot be traced. The new garden occupies the site of the old one, but obviously cannot be similar to it. It is said that in the older garden the terrace on the east was planted with flowering shrubs such as althea, snowball, lilac, and flowering currant, and on the west was planted with apple, plum, and pear trees. Planted across the top of the north terrace to keep the north wind away from the garden, ran a hedge of box trees which grew to huge size. Washington stopped at the house in January, 1781, and, on the evacuation of New York by the British, spent a night there in November, 1783, preparatory to riding in to the city.

An old garden still exists on the Van Cortlandt Estate at Croton. While its age cannot be exactly determined, it has been called the old Dutch Garden and is probably one of the oldest in this section. Pierre Van Cortlandt, the proprietor of this estate during the Revolution, was a close friend of Washington, who stopped at the house several times, memorably in 1781 and 1783.

The Beverly Robinson estate opposite West Point on the Hudson should be mentioned owing to the fact of its having been a frequent headquarters of Washington. The mansion was erected in 1750 and the estate contained 60,000 acres, fashioned after the country seats of England with "gardens, lawns, fruit orchards, broad cultivated fields and great deer parks."* Arnold was quartered there.

The Jumel Mansion still exists in the Bronx, facing the Harlem River. It was built about 1765 by Lieutenant Colonel Roger Morris,

* *The Homes of America*. By Martha J. Lamb. New York, 1879.

Loyalist. Morris had been a personal friend of Washington, having fought with him in the French and Indian War. The mansion served as a headquarters for a number of British officers during the Revolution, but was also occupied by Washington at another time. This property is shown on the British Headquarters Map of New York and Environs (1782) where extensive gardens are indicated.

The estate of Sylvester Manor, Shelter Island, at the eastern end of Long Island, was acquired in 1652 by Nathaniel Sylvester, the existing residence being built in 1735. This is an interesting existing example of a Colonial estate, and it has an attractive formal garden with box-



Courtesy of Landscape Architecture

A boxwood path

Board-Zabriskie Garden, New Jersey

bordered beds and hedges. There are fine old trees on the property and wide vistas of lawn flanked by woodland growth. The garden dates back considerably over a hundred years.

Another old garden of which there is definite record is that of the former Board-Zabriskie House on the Paramus Road, New Jersey, near the New York border, in the heart of an early Dutch settlement. This house was built about 1747 and is of the Dutch Colonial type, showing,

however, Georgian influence. Having been recently acquired for Country Club purposes, the grounds and house have been greatly altered. Up to a few years ago, however, there was an interesting old formal garden, with box borders and several interesting garden houses and arbors.

There is also still in existence the old Manice garden in Queens, now the property of the Turf and Field Club, and here is noted a distinctly formal design. The garden is laid out in close conjunction with the house, and while the flower beds take intricate geometrical forms, yet the remainder of the grounds are laid out in the style of the English naturalistic landscape. This garden is known to be over a hundred years old and, with its box borders and other characteristics somewhat like those of Sylvester Manor and others that have been mentioned, a type is pictured which may be a fair representation of the style of the home gardens of the later Eighteenth and early Nineteenth Centuries.

Of the other Hudson River manorial estates little can be said of the gardens, as there is scant existing evidence of their original features. The Van Rensselaer Manor has long since disintegrated, and the last manor house, built in 1765, was moved about thirty-five years ago to Williamstown (Mass.). An early description states that "its simple architectural elegance even now, with its fine park and magnificent trees, gives it an aristocratic air in keeping with the period of high sounding titles and lordly possessions."* The Manor of Rensselaerwyck covered an area of 1000 square miles.** Livingston Manor was partitioned long ago, but several of the old Manor Houses (erected by descendants of the original proprietors) overlooking the Hudson still remain, although their original beauties have largely departed. The original Livingston Manor comprised 160,000 acres.**

As the effects of the War wore off and prosperity and wealth increased, people began again to interest themselves in their gardens and in the development of their country places. At this time the number of good books available on Landscape Gardening had increased, and while the home owners still looked to Europe for guidance in fashioning their gardens and country homes, many of them were their own planners. In some cases, however, it has been shown that master gardeners were brought from Europe to lay out the more pretentious estates.

Pierre Charles L'Enfant, Major on Washington's staff during the Revolution and later the designer of the plan of the city of Washington, was perhaps the principal artistic authority of the period immediately

* *The Homes of America*. By Martha J. Lamb. New York, 1879.

** *Manors and Historic Homes of the Hudson Valley*. By H. D. Eberlein. Philadelphia, 1924.



Courtesy of Doubleday, Doran & Co.

Box-bordered garden paths, Sylvester Manor, Shelter Island



Manice garden, now part of the Turf and Field Club, Queens, Long Island
GARDENS CHARACTERISTIC OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

subsequent to the Revolution. He made his home in New York for a time, and while the records of his activities in this city are chiefly connected with architecture and land subdivision, nevertheless, as he later is known to have laid out gardens in the South, it is not illogical to believe that he was also consulted in this capacity in New York.

André Michaux, born near Versailles, came to this country from France in 1785, and established a nursery in Charleston, and one in the "Bergen" section, New Jersey (near New York). His influence in horticultural matters was pronounced, and he apparently designed gardens as well, such as that of Richard Varick at "Prospect Hall," in what is now Jersey City, and which was referred to as "containing rare flowers and grotesquely shaped beds and especially one long avenue of imported plum trees."*

L'Enfant and Michaux were followed after the turn of the century by Joseph Ramée, architect, in 1811, and in 1824 by André Parmentier; both engaged in the planning of country places. It is curious to note that these men were French or of French descent, and they must have brought French gardening ideals with them, for L'Enfant was well known to be inclined to formal design, as very likely also was Michaux.

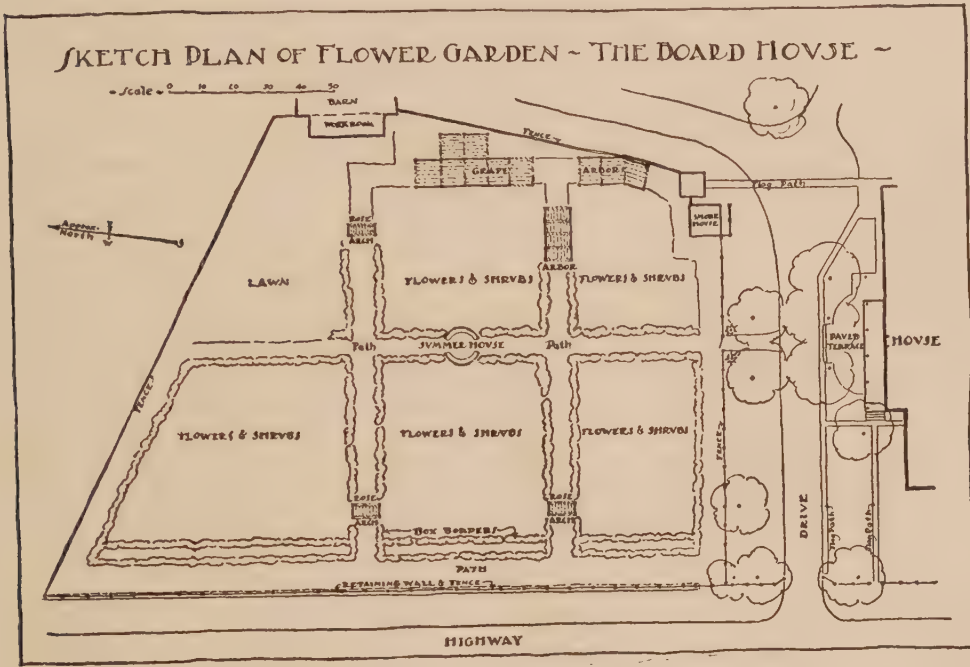
In spite of the considerable general data on this subject, there are no known existing gardens, or complete plans of such gardens, of the New York Colonial period, of which the design may be unqualifiedly placed earlier than the beginning of the Nineteenth Century, although it is safe to believe there was scant difference between those gardens of the early 1800's and those of the half century preceding.

In drawing conclusions from the available data on the Homes and Gardens of Old New York, it is quite apparent that the love of the Dutch for flowers, their experience in horticulture, and their general personal characteristics of orderliness and precision, without doubt influenced the development of a distinct type of garden. This garden, originally a system of regular beds and paths, planted in fruits, flowers, and vegetables, together with the Dutch innate love for flowers and sense of orderliness, must have affected the style of development of the many noteworthy gardens that appear in Manhattan in Colonial times.

While, in the case of the many pretentious layouts of New York country seats of the Washington period, many favored in design the style of naturalistic English landscape, it is probable that in most cases the grounds immediately adjacent to the house took a formal character

* *Historic Houses of New Jersey.* By W. Jay Mills. Philadelphia, 1902.

largely on account of the Georgian type of architecture then predominant. The gardens themselves were in general box-bordered, and in some cases contained beds laid out in geometrical patterns. Probably most of them contained fruit trees, and in some cases vegetables also.



Courtesy of Landscape Architecture—

An Old Colonial Garden in New Jersey

As a concluding thought, it is interesting, first, to remember that Washington visited many of the country seats in New York, especially during the time of the Revolution, and second, to speculate as to how much he may have influenced details of their development or may in turn have been influenced by them in making his plans for Mount Vernon.

RICHARD SCHERMERHORN, JR.



A SALEM GARDEN

CHAPTER VI

Gardens of Old Salem and the New England Colonies

George Washington's early experience as a surveyor of land and his later experience in military operations made him an observer of topography. The journals of his ordinary travels from Virginia to New England contain many entries regarding the contour of land, its exposure to the sun, the steepness of roads, and other matters of strategic interest to the farmer, to the landscape architect, and to the architect, as well as to the topographer and soldier. In his later years he became a close student of trees. His Mount Vernon diaries abound in the most tireless records of his tree-planting experiments and of his letters to Europe and to New England inquiring about new kinds of plants. If we review the old places of New England as Washington saw them, we must keep constantly before us the facts of topography, exposure, soil, and vegetation.

The New Englander, like the men of the South, based the planning of places and gardens on the remembered plans of the fatherland of England. Fortunately for us, however, the memory of the old places across the Atlantic was not always accurate. Moreover, the Colonists were not ready to sacrifice their comfort in a new bleak land to the mere copying of English traditions though these were revered. Thus, fortunately, the New England places and gardens present many interesting departures and adaptations even though the "feeling" of the designs is English. Naturally enough, the adaptations which were made by New Englanders were not the same as those made by Virginians, because the climate and building materials, as well as the manners and the customs, were not the same in these distant parts of our country.

If we compare the New England places of Washington's time with places in England, the New England places and gardens were in general smaller, less in cost, much less elaborate in detail, and not built for great permanency; they have not been mellowed by the centuries of time and history, or by the bland atmosphere of the Old Country. New England houses and outbuildings as a rule were not made of masonry, or exposed half-timbered work, or of brick. Wood was at hand in unlimited quantities and therefore it was commonly used for construction in New England. Retaining walls were rare. High walls for privacy were almost

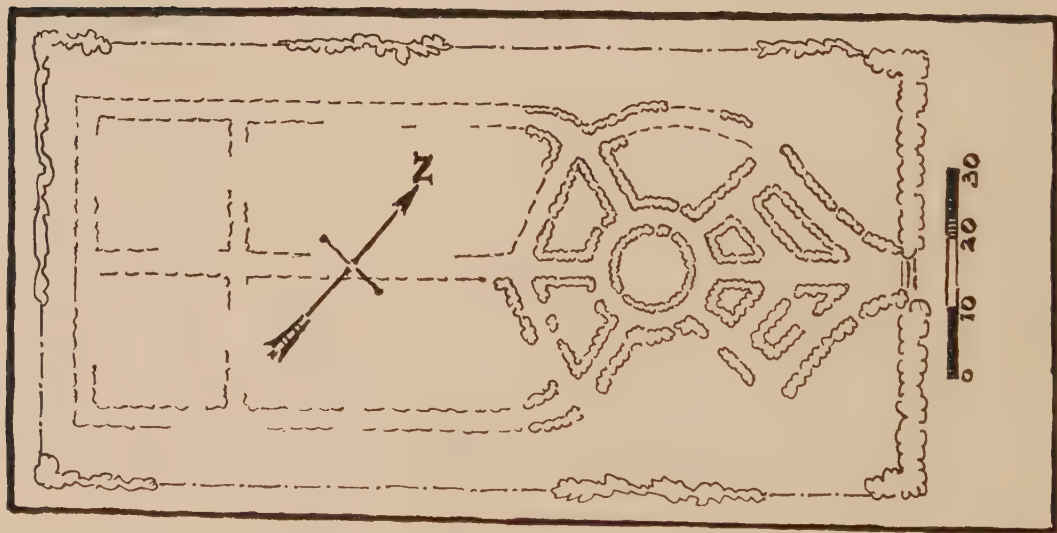


Figure 1. An ancient box-garden

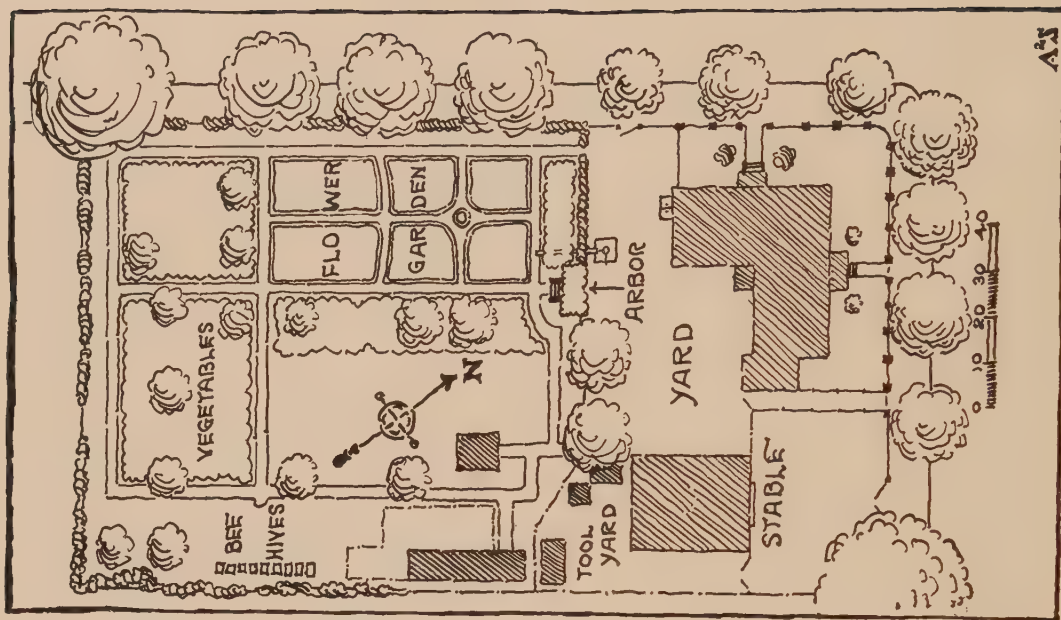


Figure 2: A town residence

unknown. Courtyards, crofts, long axial vistas, and long axial approaches were rare even in the largest country places of New England.

In comparing New England places and gardens with those of Virginia and the South in Washington's time, we must remember the colder climate of New England with its long winters, the more searching winds, the lower sun, the more broken and stony soil, the less dependence upon agriculture. Under these conditions the New Englander placed his buildings near together; a widely spaced arrangement was out of the question for reason of the cold and the deep snow. Thus he was forced into a thrift of space and of work which was not wholly natural to his temper. The New England man, by and large, did not understand long vistas, long axial approaches, symmetrically placed buildings, axially placed gardens. The climate and the soil ran counter to them. Therefore the English traditions regarding these desirable things lapsed to the number of exceptions sufficient to prove the rule.

The climate of New England made an isolated though well-rounded life like that of the Southern plantation much more difficult. True, there were isolated farms in New England, but as a whole the farms were nearer to one another than in the South and nearer to the villages, towns, and to the mills. The places were built close to the highways for convenience in the deep snow season when the towns "broke out" the highways with ox ploughs. For reasons of comfort men of great wealth also built near the highways and usually in or near the outskirts of the towns. In the isolated farms the smoke house, cobbler's shop, milk house, carpenter's shop, the weave house (usually an attic room), and other utility structures were built; but with the very small opportunities to get labor, all the structures were small and were often combined under very few roofs. Naturally, therefore, the New England places were small, compact, unsymmetrical; but because of these very limitations they were exceedingly interesting in the records of our Colonial times.

Let no one think there was gloom in the gardens of this land of long winters and of consequent thrift. Far from it. When April came the earliest wild flowers were later than the common flowers of the gardens. Long before the countryside came into leaf the dooryards were blooming with the honeysuckles, the azaleas, and the cornels which had been brought from England to these shores. Then followed the glory of the plum, cherry, pear, apple, lilac, and quince. Delights of this kind were later than the same delights in Virginia, but in New England they came one by one from April through June and not with a rush through a shorter season. The early New England pictures, the

needlework, the May Day customs, the curious laconic poetry, even the terrible sermons hot with a fire lacking in the sun, portray a love for gardening and for flowers which was the more intense because of the cold winters and the austere doctrine which, with all their goodness, nipped it somewhat while making it real.

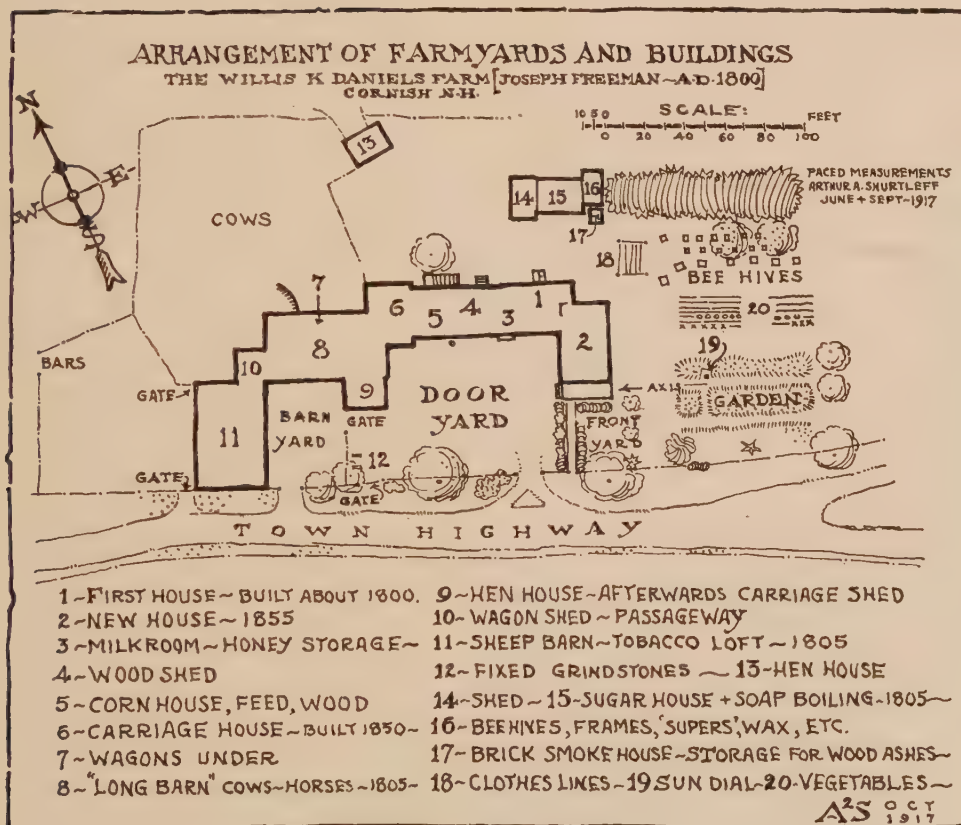
Old Salem, Massachusetts, is mentioned in the title of this brief paper not because it was unique among New England towns, but because it is typical (like Marblehead, Newburyport, Portsmouth, Windsor, Greenfield, Hatfield, and a score of others) in possessing Colonial places which have come down to us from the time of Washington with some of the ancient glamour of interest and charm still clinging to them. The students of those times well know their ignorance of the exact lineaments of the ancient places. We are all in danger of being far too sure that what we attribute to the old layouts actually existed in the old days. In this dilemma we are safer in describing the oldest of the places as they existed according to measurements as recent as a third of a century ago, than to attempt to go back a century and a half by imagination, where far less complete records are available.

Scattered through New England are many old houses which have been kept in a fair state of repair, and which, therefore, have survived wind, rain, and snow since Colonial times. Few of these old buildings still possess the ancient ells, sheds, barns, gardens, fences, pumps, and other structures which once stood near at hand. Money and care have not been available to keep those lesser structures in repair and they have fallen to ruin and to dust. Few of the ancient trees of Colonial times have survived, few of the shrubs, and fewer of the flowers. The hedges of the garden paths have vanished, and the paths have become lost in the grass sod. I shall pass by the depleted places of this type and refer the reader to places richer in material even though later. The assumption is made that these places have retained much of their ancient appearance and have copied an earlier mode of the same locality.

The accompanying plan (see page 49) of the John Freeman farm, built before 1800, shows a typical New England farm group of the usual irregular plan. The composition faces south. All the out-buildings, except the shed, sugar house, and smoke house, can be reached from within-doors. The pattern of the garden, the position of the beehives, and all the other appurtenances are shown. The driveway's three contacts with the town highway show to what large extent this farmer, like his neighbors, depended upon the highway for his most intimate approach. The cold climate of Cornish, New Hampshire, restrained the Daniels



A portion of the farm group



A NEW ENGLAND FARMYARD

family from extensive gardens, but the love of flowers and the efforts to secure an orderly axial and rectangular relation to the house is expressed. The hen-house (see 13 on the plan) is turned exactly south to secure the maximum sun in the winter. The wings of the house also extend toward the south to receive the warmth. The heavy planting of trees at the north was arranged to break the force of the winds.

The Marblehead plan (see page 50) shows an axial approach on the north and a curious attempt to secure an axial approach on the south. The lofty site of the building on a series of terraces is indicated by the cross sections. By placing the stable on the main highway it was possible for the inhabitants of the house to reach the best traveled highway in the winter without removing snow from the more impressive northern approach. The zigzag alignment of steps and paths at the west side of the house indicates the frugality of the New Englander, who built these steps where they would conform most closely to the topography. He was willing to make a detour to save costs and to secure convenience. To many students of design this was a fundamentally good quality in the New Englander, but to others designs of this type express a want of vision. The nearness of the pastures and of the orchards to the house also expresses frugality and good common sense. The space allotted to gardens here is very small.

Plans on page 46 illustrate garden patterns from the Salem-Newburyport-Portsmouth region. Figure 2 shows the practical arrangement of a service yard adjacent to the coach house and stable behind the mansion. From this yard an arbor gives entrance to the gardens which are not axially placed, except in relation to this arbor. The garden patterns are all rectangular and relate in the most frugal and delightful way to the boundaries of the lot. All these places are in the towns, so the boundaries are relatively small and rectangular. There is no effort at display here. The grounds were arranged conveniently for the pleasure of the family and to secure the least cost for upkeep. Page 53 shows a characteristic long narrow garden having a wisteria arbor, but in other respects having no relation to the house. The loveliness of this New England place is well expressed by this plan. The names of some of the flowers are indicated and the extraordinary simplicity of the layout. The intimate garden near the corner of the house is bordered with box, which, however, does not thrive in northern New England without much protection. In some of these gardens the patterns of the ancient box gardens which have been overrun with grass and weeds and whose designs were discoverable a third of a century ago have disappeared.

A glance at a design of this kind (see Figure 1, page 46) shows the care-free gesture of the layout as far as classic precedent is concerned, but the result is of unusual interest.

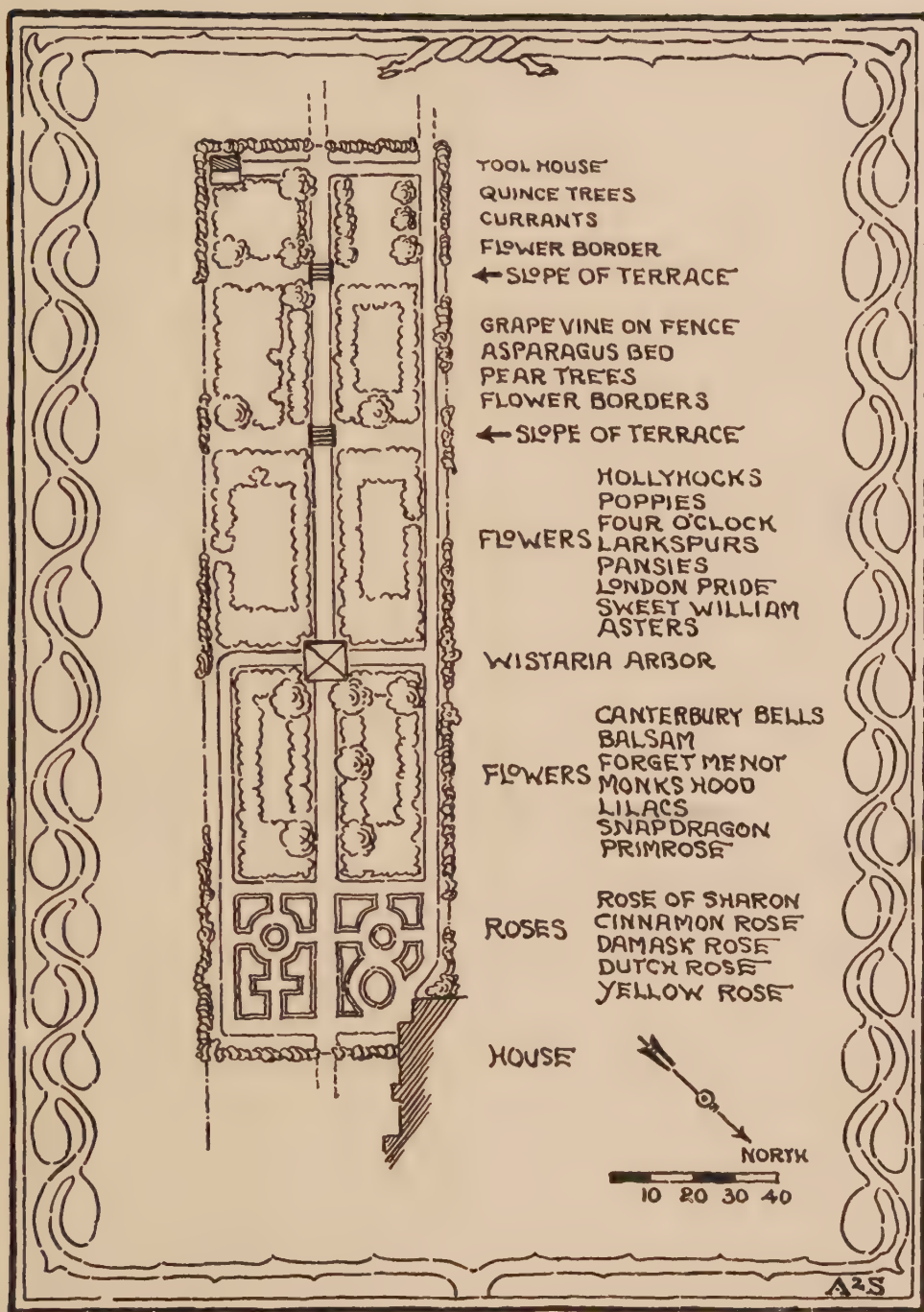
Privacy was secured in the Colonial gardens that are illustrated on pages 46 and 53 by the use of board fences, five to six feet high, placed on the property lines and unadorned with pilasters or lattices, or any other modern devices to break the plainness and to add to the first cost and the upkeep. As a rule, all interesting gardens of these old types are provided with high fences. Where there are no gardens, there are generally no high fences.

In considering all these early Colonial layouts, the reader must remember that automobiles and all their paraphernalia were unknown. Small turning spaces were adequate for the horse-drawn vehicles of those times. Only small quarters were needed for the carriages and for the animals. The buildings, sheds, and turning spaces were not considered ugly, but were made frankly a part of the equipment of the home and were kept in good condition by men who took pride in the home grounds. The small courtyards were often paved with cobblestones when such material could be had from ships using stone ballast and coming without full cargoes from foreign ports.

The hospitality of the New Englander was genuine and hearty, but the student will understand that hospitality in its widest sense could be practiced more generously by the men of Virginia and the South, who lived in a less austere climate and who were enabled, therefore, to provide more liberally for comfort both within and without doors. George Washington enjoyed northern hospitality on many occasions and it made a deep impression upon him. During his campaigns in New England, he spent much time in country places where delightful grounds lay spread out for his enjoyment.

As we view the field of Colonial life of country and town embracing the South and New England, we constantly see the figure of George Washington. He moves northward and southward always with understanding of men and environments. It is not strange that the history of these far-flung parts of our country cannot be written without constant reminders of the broad sympathy and the knowledge possessed by Washington. He wished to be known as a practical surveyor and a planter. Recognized ability in these fields was a forerunner of his fame in the more unusual and wider labors to which the country later called him.

ARTHUR A. SHURCLIFF.



A NEW ENGLAND FLOWER GARDEN OF COLONIAL DAYS

CHAPTER VII

Colonial Gardens of Charleston and the Far South

On a peninsula formed by the junction of the Ashley and the Cooper rivers, some seven miles inland from the South Carolina coast, Old Charleston developed its own civilization in the New World. The original settlers—Cavaliers and gentlemen adventurers from England, and Huguenot refugees from France—brought with them a grace of living which blossomed individually under a warm southern sun. Isolation on the north by dense forests and by the perils of the voyage around Cape Hatteras, on the west by unfriendly Indians, and on the south by the Spaniards, promoted an independence of thought and action which has made Charleston homes and gardens distinctly individual among those of the thirteen colonies.

When Washington arrived at Charleston on May 2, 1791, he found a city which compared favorably with those he had seen to the north. In the homes of the citizens he perceived on the one hand an aristocratic quality which had come over in the inner consciousness of the Cavalier stock and had found expression in dignified mansions, formal gardens, and great gateways; but this dignity had been softened by life in a sub-tropical climate which, under the necessity of making provision for coolness, had developed an ease of living. Spacious verandas protected the houses from a burning sun, high ceilings encouraged a circulation of air indoors, and large windows with lattice blinds admitted the prevailing breezes while warding off unwelcome heat.

The characteristic type of house with which Charleston of the post-Revolutionary period is associated—a three- or four-story structure, one room wide, on a deep lot with sometimes little more than a fifty-foot frontage—occupied a north corner of the property with one narrow end at the sidewalk edge. The broad front of the building, faced by a two- or three-story veranda, thus enjoyed both the garden which lay before it and the prevailing southern wind. A high wall of brick and wood along the street assured complete privacy; but where it joined the house it grew in dignity and height to include a door that served as the main entrance to the place. This doorway, with a dignified architectural treatment, opened directly onto the street end of the veranda; the house

itself was entered only by an entirely separate door that led in from the middle of the veranda. Frequently the house was elevated so that the main living rooms were raised above the ground floor; in this case the street door opened onto a stairway that led up to the veranda which overlooked the garden below.

Contemporary chronicles of Washington's time describe for us the charm of these walled gardens with their grass lawns, shade-giving trees, and fragrant vines and flowers of the South. Yet the area was not all given over to garden, for at the back were the kitchens, quarters for servants, storage space, and the stables. An impressive feature of many of the old places, even in the small houses, is the pair of large gate posts in the street wall, flanking the entrance to the stable court.

Outside of Charleston a number of villages and country places had been developed by Washington's time. A description of one of these places, at Goose Creek, remains to us in an old letter which relates a visit to

several very handsome gentleman's seats, at all of wch we were entertained with the most friendly politeness. The first we arrived at was Crowfield, Mr. Wm. Middleton's seat, where we spent a most agreeable week. The house stands a mile from but in sight of the road, and makes a very handsome appearance; as you draw nearer new beauties discover themselves; first the beautiful vine mantling the wall, laden with delicious clusters, next a large pond in the midst of a spacious green presents itself as you enter the gate. The house is well furnished, the rooms well contrived . . . From the back door is a wide walk a thousand feet long, each side of wch nearest the house is a grass plat ornamented in a serpentine manner with flowers; next to that on the right hand is what immediately struck my rural taste, a thicket of young, tall live oaks, where a variety of airy choristers poured forth their melody . . . Opposite on the left hand is a large square bowling green, sunk a little below the level of the rest of the garden, with a walk quite round bordered by a double row of fine large flowering Laurel and Catalpas—wch afford both shade and beauty. My letter will be of unreasonable length if I don't pass over the mounts, wilderness, etc., and come to the boundary of this charming spot, where is a large fish pond with a mount rising out of the middle the top of wch is level with the dwelling house, and upon it is a Roman temple. On each side are other large fish ponds, properly disposed wch form a fine prospect of water from the house—beyond this are the smiling fields dressed in vivid green.*

Farther up the rivers were the great plantations surrounded by rice fields and blue gum and cypress swamps. Often the houses were set up on high brick foundations as a precaution against rising of the river in freshet times, while the outbuildings for servants were set off in a grouping of their own. On other plantations, the houses, not impressive in themselves, though often situated on high bluffs whence they commanded views over mile after mile of rice fields, were surrounded by lawns, gardens,

* *Historic Houses of South Carolina*. By H. K. Leiding. Philadelphia, J. B. Lippincott Co., 1921. p. 24.

and meadows, with woodlands in the rear. The diary of a traveler through these parts in 1785-1786 records pleasure at the

opportunity of seeing the different plantations in (this) vicinity . . . They are chiefly rice plantations and of course there prevails a sameness thro the whole—but still there is a variety in regard of buildings, avenues, walls and gardens. There is a common taste for improvements of this kind among the planters here about.*

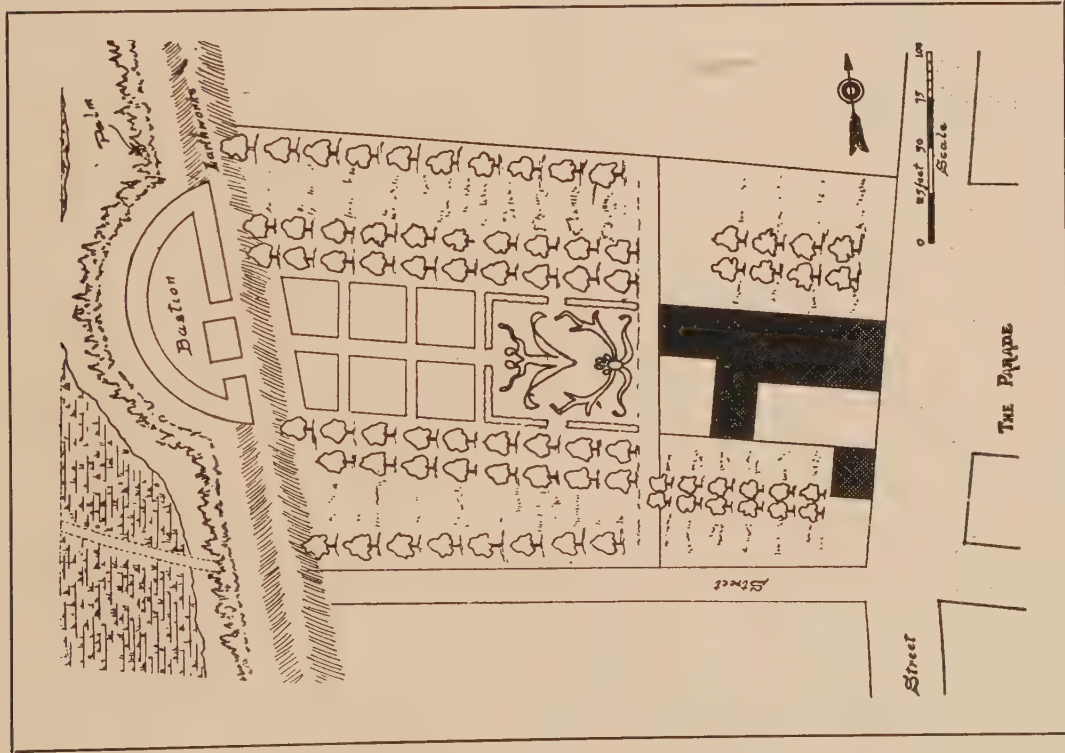
Farther south, the first settlement at Savannah was established in 1733 when large grants of land were made on condition that each grantee bring ten able-bodied men to cultivate the mulberry tree. From the earliest times the typical one-story plantation house with high basement and long sloping roof to shade the wide verandas became established on the high wooded bluffs bordering the wide salt rivers of the Savannah district. When silk culture proved unsuccessful, the high lands bordering the salt rivers were given over to cotton, and rice was planted on the fresh-water banks. Now that rice cultivation has been largely discontinued, many places have been deserted; but great avenues of live oaks draped with gray Spanish moss, masses of evergreen shrubs, holly trees, and the ancient mulberries, suggest the attractive home that the late 18th-century Savannah plantation afforded.

It must not be forgotten that gardening on this continent during Washington's lifetime was not confined to the thirteen colonies. Still farther south, when America had been known for little more than a hundred years, two small Spanish settlements had been established: St. Augustine in Florida (1565), and Santa Fe (1604-1608) in the southwest. According to the custom of all Spanish colonization, soldiers and priests went together, and it is not likely that much time could have passed before the Jesuit fathers were cultivating their gardens; indeed we have an account of Sir Francis Drake's visit to St. Augustine in 1583 when, finding that the Spanish resented his coming, he "burned their buildings and destroyed their gardens." Sixty-five years later St. Augustine had been rebuilt to a town of three hundred householders with "a flourishing Monastery of the Order of St. Francis, with fifty Franciscans," which was probably the finest and the best garden of the community.

In 1763, at the time of the cession of Florida to the English, the Governor's gardens were "stocked with rare ornamental plants, trees, and flowers."** The accompanying plan shows the mansion fronting the Parade or public square, and opening at the back to a formal walled

* *Ibid.*, p. 47.

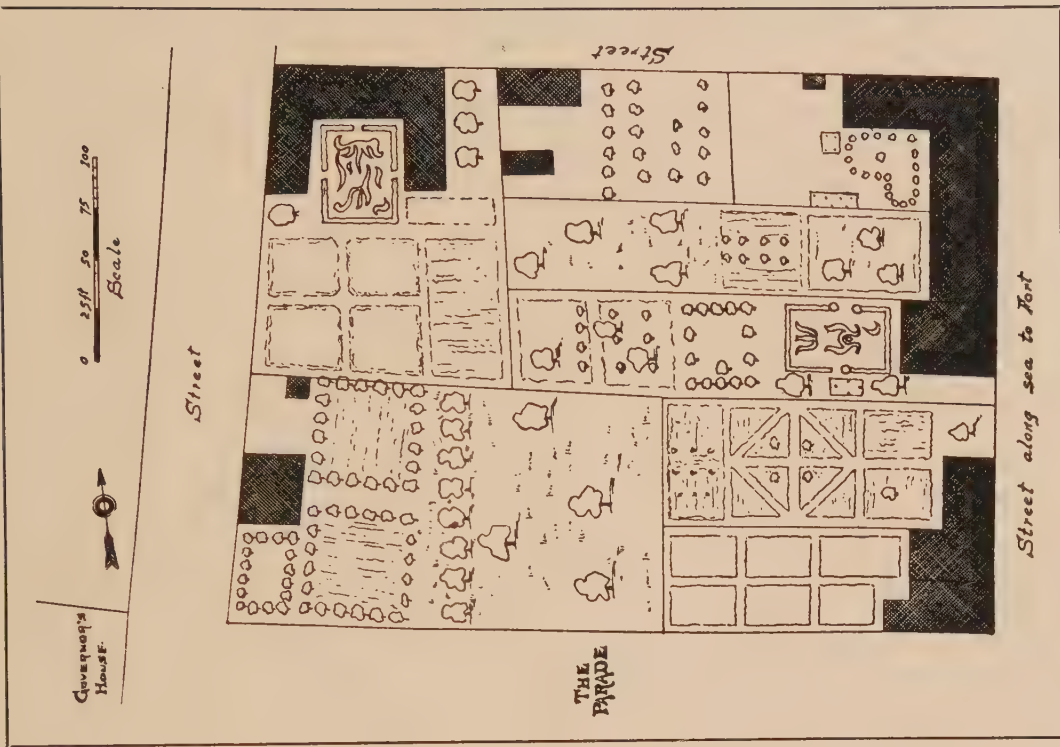
** *Old-fashioned Gardening*. By Grace Tabor. New York, Robert M. McBride & Co., 1925. p. 22.



By permission of Robert M. McBride & Co.

The Governor's House and Gardens

The double line of trees provided a shaded walk from which to view the central parterre.



From *Old-fashioned Gardening*

A Block of Residences across from the Governor's House

The gardens were walled and were entered through the houses or through covered passages from the street.

garden facing the sea. The central portion contained square beds of flowers and, immediately adjoining the house, a design which was probably executed in box according to the prevailing fashion in Spain. At either side a double row of trees running the length of the garden offered a shady walk which overlooked the central parterre. Presumably there were very few native plants used, since the settlers in a new world would have wished to make their gardens as like those in Spain as they could.

Another community where gardens developed during the Eighteenth Century was New Orleans. Here, only fourteen years before Washington's birth, the French had planted a post which grew into a town of some size. In 1762 France transferred Louisiana to Spain, in whose hands it remained for nearly forty years until its return to France in 1800. Spanish ownership might not have been so significant in the history of the homes and gardens of the city if a disastrous fire in 1780 had not destroyed a large part of the residential section; for as the city was rebuilt it took on a Spanish aspect in its adobe or brick walls, arcades, inner courts, ponderous doors and windows, balconies, and white or yellow lime-washed stucco. The newer houses, however, were of brick, sometimes of two stories, but generally one story high with small narrow balconies projecting over the sidewalks. The following description suggests some of the living conditions which confronted the New Orleans residents of 1799:

One of the most disagreeable features of the city in those early days was the condition of the streets in which not a stone had been laid. A wooden drain served for a gutter . . . and the street between the sidewalks was alternately a swamp and a mass of stifling dust. Wagons dragged along, with the wheels sunk to the hubs in mud . . . The city was lighted by means of oil lamps suspended from wooden posts, from which an arm projected. The light only penetrated a very short distance, and it was the custom always to use lanterns on the street. The order of march, when a family went out in the evening, was first a slave bearing a lantern; then another slave bearing the shoes which were to be worn in the ball-room or theatre, and other articles of full dress that were donned only after the destination was reached, and last, the family.

There were no cisterns in those days, the water of the Mississippi, filtrated, served as drinking water, while water for common household needs was obtained from wells dug on the premises. Some houses possessed as many as two of these wells.*

In contrast to the rude streets were the quaint old Spanish courtyards of the houses, fresh and cool, with sunlit pavements across which palms, olives, and magnolias cast their shadows. These were the gardens of the Colonial period and we find their modern counterpart in the courtyards of the old French Quarter of New Orleans to-day.

* *Historical Sketch Book and Guide to New Orleans and Environs.* Ed. and comp. by several leading writers of the New Orleans press. New York, 1885. p. 14.

Gardening in the Southwest during the Eighteenth Century flourished in the Missions of the Franciscan fathers which extended in a long line from Mexico north through Texas and Arizona to San Francisco. The *padres* who took part in the northward march of Spanish expeditions from Mexico founded posts in San Antonio (1720-1731) and throughout the region to the west, but the best-known establishments are those that stretched at intervals along five hundred miles of the California coast. From their beginning in 1769 the California Missions provided shelter for the traveler and a welcome from the little community that developed around each until the time of their dissolution (1826-1846) by order of the Mexican Government. Without skilled artisans, the builders drew on their memory of the churches with which they were familiar in Spain, and, under the force of the local conditions, evolved a distinctive type of architecture. One of the characteristic features of the Mission was the patio, a large garden area, usually with a fountain, palms, and fruits such as the orange, lemon, and lime, surrounded by buildings. Planned primarily for defense against outlaws, unfriendly Indians, and marauders from pirate ships, the patio became eventually a council chamber, living room, and kitchen garden. There were other gardens too,—in the open but protected by cactus hedges,—and acres of vineyards.

Within the limitations of this chapter it would not be appropriate to speak of the early gardens of the north central and western part of the continent, nor of the manorial establishments of the seigneurs in the St. Lawrence valley, but it should be remembered that there were homes and gardens in these regions during the lifetime of George Washington that are worth our study.

BRADFORD WILLIAMS.

CHAPTER VIII

The Colonial Garden To-day

The Colonial Garden filled a want in its time, and is now a thing of the past. We cannot bring it to life to-day except in our imagination or our memory of what has gone before. And yet there is a subtle quality that pervades the homes and gardens of the Colonial period that we should be able to catch and transpose to our own use,—an indefinable spirit of the design that, when translated into modern terms, will create a Colonial garden that is appropriate to our life to-day.

George Washington, the farmer, loved the land and the fullness thereof, but as a home-owner he loved the isolated privacy of his own garden and grounds, where he created beauty and comfort for his friends, his family, and himself. There he found contentment, and in so doing pointed out the way for us to follow. We, too, can use the principles that Washington followed, and can find in the Colonial home grounds where he found his inspiration the answer to some of our own problems of home and garden building.

Large or small, North or South, certain characteristics were noticeable in all Colonial gardens. First, they were useful in that they furnished food and drink,—herbs, vegetables, and fruits. Only rather lately has fashion separated the decorative "flower garden" from the useful vegetable garden. Washington did better. His box-edged flower garden is balanced by the vegetable garden, which is not merely useful but is made ornamental with carefully placed walls, paths, lines of grapes, and box-wood. Neat rows of vegetables, bush fruits, and fruit trees, when prettily arranged and edged with flowers, are capable of giving strong esthetic satisfaction to the seeing eye. Our Colonial forebears knew that use and beauty can and do go hand in hand.

A chief feature in the home surroundings, both South and North, was the "yard,"—a generally useful place close to house and outbuildings, where all sorts of work and quiet recreation were concentrated. Wood chopping in one corner, sun-cooking preserves in another, linen bleaching in the middle, churning under a grape arbor at one side,—a hundred forms of industry were carried on here. And during the noon hour or at dusk it offered a protected spot in which to gather for talk



© Mission House Association of Stockbridge

Photograph by Paul J. Weber

OLD COLONIAL HOUSE WITH MODERN DOORYARD GARDEN

The Mission House, a memorial to Mr. and Mrs. Joseph H. Choate,
in Stockbridge, Massachusetts

of the day's doings. At Mount Vernon, Washington created "a village" of small buildings grouped closely about the mansion, and in this "yard" that the Master inspected every morning between his rising hour of four and his breakfast at seven, his servants concentrated their multitudinous duties pertaining to the care of a great plantation.

This general principle of usefulness applies as appropriately to-day as ever it did in Washington's time. The grounds and gardens of every American home should be useful. Good fruit from trees and bushes, nuts to crack for the trouble of gathering, vegetables for the table (many of which, like asparagus and rhubarb, require almost no attention from those who lack time for gardening), flowers to enjoy,—these are both useful and ornamental purposes to which the house surroundings can be devoted. For those who have other interests than gardening, we can lay out game courts. Some games can be played in small areas, such as Badminton. An enclosed yard for little children is a joy to them and a comfort to their mothers. And above all, work can be done more efficiently in a well-ordered yard. To-day we spend less time chopping wood and churning. Our yards have too frequently dwindled to small areas used for drying clothes. On the other hand, we have found many new chores which could best be done in an enclosed, neatly arranged yard, and we should make more immediate use of this Colonial inheritance.

Another guiding principle of the Colonists in laying out their grounds was economy in the use of land and in providing for ease of maintenance. The country was hot and dry in summer, then as now, but they had no garden pipes and hose. Consequently it was convenient, on this account as for others, to have the more choice growing things in gardens close to the house where well-water, first used for washing and bleaching, could be finally disposed around the precious plants; or else to grow them on slopes in orderly terraces falling away from cisterns where rain water was thriftily conserved. On the smaller places such gardens were naturally compact and neatly joined, one to another. Lawns were definitely set apart and, on modest places where labor was more needed for other things, reduced to a minimum. For there were no lawn mowers: grass was cut by hand scythes, or was kept mowed by cattle. The lower part of the great tree-lined vista down to the river from the east front of Mount Vernon, separated by a sunk wall from the immediate house lawn, gave Washington much concern until he hit upon the happy idea of keeping it mowed by browsing deer.

There is every reason, too, for our following the Colonial good sense in economical arrangement of land for use and maintenance. The best



Photograph by Paul J. Weber

MODERN ADAPTATION OF COLONIAL GARDEN WITH BOX-EDGED ROSE BEDS

Residence in Simsbury, Connecticut

plan is to concentrate the areas where similar work is done. Vegetable, flower, and fruit gardens should adjoin each other or be actually combined in one useful and attractive unit. Service areas, garage, tool sheds, cellar and kitchen doors, etc., should be near together,—all opening on the enclosed “yard” if possible. When a place is orderly and practical in arrangement it is economical to maintain. Lastly, there should be no meaningless, useless places. Too often one sees some land back of the garage or beside the house or between garden and property line which is, strictly speaking, neither part of lawn or garden nor put to any definite use. This is wasteful. Better plant an apple tree than nothing.

A third characteristic of the Colonial Garden is the inclusion of every comfort to induce people to go out of doors and live in the open. Among the most important comforts was privacy. Walls, in Virginia and Pennsylvania, alternated with hedges and fences to separate the garden from the outer world. Fences of palings and solid boarding served the same purposes in the North. In large places “the private garden” was even an inner, especially enclosed part of the general garden treatment. Mount Vernon, the homestead, was hospitably open to all who knocked; but Washington was forced by the crowds of people who came to pay him respect in his later years to set aside certain portions of his grounds for his own comfort and privacy, as private house rooms were reserved to special uses.

Not the least of outdoor comforts in the Colonial home was the provision of suitable garden structures for pleasure and for useful ends. Wide paved grape arbors, cool vine-clad summer houses or fragrant bowers, and benches in shade or sun for choice according to the weather were the scenes of many restful garden hours. On the purely useful side there were hives for the ever-interesting honey bees, deep arched woodsheds, and the well-sweep with cool refreshment near at hand.

People who live in their gardens must be able to retire in them as to the walled-in rooms of a house. Many of us in these democratic times have forgotten this fact which was obvious to George Washington. If a high wall or fence around the “out-door living room” would be too expensive or for any reason unwise, then grow a good high hedge of lilac in the North, or tree box in the South. Get some really comfortable garden chairs and benches. Set a flat stone under their legs if they sink in the ground,—or make a little brick platform. Have a place in the shade and one in the sun, protected from too cold winds. Have other places where the lightest breezes can slip under the trees without obstruction in sweltering weather. Keep water fresh in a bird bath or a water-



Photograph by Paul J. Weber

THE COLONIAL GRAPE ARBOR TO-DAY

An outdoor terrace in Connecticut where meals can be served

lily tub that the family pets can drink from. There will always be comfort and diversion in such a garden, shut away from the outside world.

In all things, both Northern and Southern Colonists had a real sense of the comely and appropriate. They liked precision and orderliness, probably all the more in contrast with their enveloping enemy, the wilderness, which must have seemed unkempt and disorderly to them. They possessed a marked sense of balance and good proportion. They preferred sun and air rather than stiffly architectural arrangement.

To plan square garden beds bounded by walks from which one can see and attend to plants is rather a human and universal tendency than a strictly Colonial one. To have these beds regularly edged with hedges of box is, however, almost a distinctive trait of early American gardens. It is a sensible idea, as the separation between path and bed is difficult for the gardener to handle from week to week. It is typically Colonial, too, to run these paths through, around, and across the vegetable gardens, cutting them into plots. The paths themselves were frequently bordered by flower beds and small fruit trees, making a most successful combination of ornament and use that we might more often attempt nowadays. Near the house these garden plots were subdivided into small pattern beds for pot herbs and flowers. Thus the various features of the gardens were unified in idea, yet varied and separated one from another in practice. In any event, the exact size and shape of these gardens was rarely imposed solely by the esthetic sense of the gardener. The shape and size of the lot on which they were placed seems to have played its own, by no means minor, rôle in the design.

So it should be to-day. We start as gardeners always have with ideas of squares, rectangles, and curves. But we are growing rigid in our conceptions, one fears; at any rate, one hears of a "true" line, a "true" circle, as if it were more virtuous than a bent line or an oval shape. The Colonists adjusted their forms gracefully to existing objects: used them as opportunities to create changes and varieties in designs that otherwise might have been too prim. So should our side paths follow property lines regardless of "true right angles." Where symmetrical patterns are wanted, stick to the plan where possible; but if the garage gets in the way, yield the design to the inevitable. Get around as best one can, and then go on again. Instead of unsightliness, the result is fairly sure of having unexpected charm. For it shows common sense and ability to make the most of what we have—both agreeable qualities.

At Mount Vernon, George Washington used wood and brick, which were common materials for houses and gardens in Virginia. In Penn-



© Mission House Association of Stockbridge

Photograph by Paul J. Weber

FRONT YARD GARDEN WITH DESIGN COPIED FROM COLONIAL ORIGINAL

The Mission House, Stockbridge

sylvania, they often made houses, barns, and walls of stone; in New York, of brick and wood; and in New England they worked mostly with wood. It makes little difference what materials we use to-day. Usually it is best to continue garden objects, such as walls or fences, summer houses, and tool sheds, of the same stuff that the house is built of. At any rate, even when different they can be painted or white-washed to get a harmony of color throughout.

During Washington's lifetime the horizon of the average gardener was immensely widened in the realm of plant material. During the "Dark Ages" and until some time after this country was settled, the use of plants for medicine, flavoring, etc., was overwhelmingly dominant. Indeed the first English book in which the pleasures of gardening received attention equal to its usefulness is generally considered to be Parkinson's *Paradisi in Sole, Paradisus terrestris*, published in 1629. Gradually interest grew in the broader aspects of horticulture. Nurseries were started near New York and Philadelphia. Explorers went to the ends of the then known world to find new plants and trees. The public followed the experiments of introduction with keen interest. Seeds from home gardens had always been part of the pioneer's equipment. The qualities of American plant material were observed and enjoyed. Interchange of plants among friends was a common courtesy. Washington received new material from travelers and Europe. Is it too much to believe that he himself presented to Lafayette the American elm which the Frenchman planted, now standing at the edge of the moat by his old home at "La Grange"?

To-day we are far more fortunate than were the Colonists, in that we have nurseries on every hand to furnish us with a wealth of plant life that they never knew. Washington's manner of using plants still remains, however, as an object lesson to us. He studied them all, tried such new material as he could get, watched it to discover its best uses, and then recommended it to others. We have so much about us to-day as to seem confusing; but to offset this profusion, we have far better scientific knowledge and more useful sources of information than ever our ancestors had.

FLETCHER STEELE.

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